



**Review and documentation of the
progress and status
of the USAID/West Africa funded
Bridge Capacity Development
Program**

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Table of Content

| | |
|---|--------|
| Acronyms | 3 |
| Executive Summary | 4 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| PART 1: Changes at Personnel and Institutional level within CILSS and CORAF | 10 |
| 1. CILSS | 10 |
| 1.1. Introduction | 10 |
| 1.2. Changes as a result of training/coaching and revolving internship program | 10 |
| Communications/Knowledge Management | 10 |
| Human Resource Management | 14 |
| Resource Mobilization | 16 |
| Monitoring and Evaluation | 18 |
| Executive Secretariat | 20 |
| 2. CORAF | 22 |
| 2.1. Introduction | 22 |
| 2.2. Changes as a result of training and coaching, the revolving internship program and the NARS visitors program | 22 |
| Communication and knowledge management | 22 |
| Human Resource Management | 24 |
| Resource mobilization | 27 |
| Monitoring and Evaluation | 29 |
| Governance of the Board | 32 |
| Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) Reform Package | 34 |
| Cooperation between CORAF and NARS | 34 |
| Effective administration | 35 |
| PART II: Revolving internship and NARS visitors program | 36 |
| 1. The revolving internship program | 36 |
| 2. The NARS visitors program | 40 |
| PART III: Conclusions and recommendations | 47 |
| 1. Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations – by CILSS | 47 |
| 2. Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations – by CORAF | 49 |
| 3. Overall conclusions and recommendations – by MDF | 51 |

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Overview documents consulted

Annex 2 – Facts and figures based on interviews with CORAF staff

Annex 3 – Facts and figures based on interviews with CILSS staff

Annex 4 – Extended report interviews with interns from the revolving internship program

Annex 5 – Facts and figures based on interviews with participants of NARS visitor program

Annex 6 – Summary of trainings

Annex 7 – Scope of Work, Review and documentation of the progress and status of the
USAID/West Africa funded Bridge Capacity Development Program, 30/07/2013.

Acronyms

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| BCDP | Bridge Capacity Development Program |
| CILSS | Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel |
| CORAF/WECARD | West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| ES | Executive Secretariat |
| HR(M) | Human Resource Management |
| KM | Knowledge Management |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NARS | National Agricultural Research System |
| PME | Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation |
| SMART | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bounded |
| STC | Scientific and Technical Committee |
| USAID | US Agency for International Development |

Executive Summary

Africa Lead is a program sponsored by the U.S. government's Agency for International Development (USAID). Africa Lead operates across Sub-Saharan Africa from two regional offices.

In 2012, MDF West Africa assisted Africa Lead with the execution of the "Bridge Capacity Development Program (BCDP) for two of the three organizations in the program: CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel), CORAF /WECARD (West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development) and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States). The goal of the Bridge Capacity Development program is to promote institutional change and sustainable impact on the technical and operational efficiency of CORAF & CILSS. The main goal of the BCDP - is to address the recommendations outlined within the institutional assessments and evaluations carried out in May 2011 of CILSS and CORAF.

Objectives

This review aims to identify, analyze, and then document to what extent the above mentioned overall goal of the BCDP has been realised, resulting in institutional and personnel changes. The result of this review is a comprehensive report highlighting how the combination of interventions offered through the Bridge Capacity Development Programs has addressed the gaps, identified during the 2011 institutional assessments as well as lessons learned, and recommendations for future programming.

Part I of the report gives an overview of the changes observed and documented at the institutional and personnel levels within CILSS and CORAF. This section explains to which extent the different trainings and the internship program (mainly the content of the program) have had an effect on the functioning of both organizations. Part II of the report presents the results of the assessment of the revolving internship program (related to the process aspects) and the NARS visitors program. Part III explores the conclusions as well as recommendations for the program.

Main conclusions and lessons learnt – CILSS

The assessment has revealed that CILSS has taken major steps to improve its **internal and external communication**. Through the internship program (and other initiatives) efforts have been made to modernize CILSS by introducing new IT tools and technologies. **HRM** is the domain where less progress has been made compared to the other organizational aspects. Nevertheless immediately after the training an HR action plan was developed by the participants. The interviewees affirmed that most of the important action points were not put in place. The trainings on **budgeting and writing proposals** have provided a good basis to strengthen competencies in the field of fund mobilization. Major efforts have been made to improve the **M&E competency** level of staff by means of a M&E, evaluation and RBM training. M&E tools and databases have been developed and put into practice. CILSS has enhanced its level of thinking and is working towards a more **result-oriented organizational attitude and culture** instead of developing and executing activity-based interventions.

Recommendations – CILSS

The strategic **communication plan** should be shared within the organization and with relevant stakeholders, as well as regularly revised and updated. Further strengthening of IT

and **knowledge management** could be realized by interns and eventually a more specific training on knowledge management, capitalization and exchange of knowledge through systems such as e-learning platforms. Future emphasis should be placed on the **recruitment of an HR officer** and on the **development of critical HR policies** like a salary policy, career development and training.

The team recommends that more specialized and strategic courses should be organized for staff involved in **resource mobilization** specifically in building private-public partnerships and other specialized topics related to fund mobilization and cost recovery strategies. Coaching or training on **how to use monitoring and evaluation** for evaluating policies besides project/program evaluation should be continued. It is also important to give sufficient attention to strengthening the capacities of the M&E team and to oversee the division of tasks and ensure complementarities.

Main conclusions and lessons learnt – CORAF

Considerable progress has been made in the field of **communication and knowledge management**. The interns have played a major role in supporting the development of practical tools and instruments on communication and KM. Training results have been translated into an **HR plan** that has been executed during the past 12 months. Furthermore it seems that the HR training has also resulted in a more open working environment where feedback is more easily given and received. The trainings on both **budgeting and writing proposals** have provided a good basis to strengthen competencies in the field of resource mobilization. A more **result-oriented** way of thinking and working has led to more effective Terms of Reference for projects, better reports and a higher quality of indicators. Evaluation results of the training on **board governance** reveal that knowledge has been increased about the following topics:

- i. the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors
- ii. the factors contributing to a good functioning board (atmosphere, quality of moderation, team work, etc).

The knowledge gained has contributed significantly for board members to feel more secure while executing their roles and functions. Quality of sessions and interaction between the board and management have improved considerably.

Recommendations – CORAF

It is important to continue the efforts and to consolidate the results achieved so far on **communication and KM**. The team views the development of a KM strategy so that KM activities and instruments can be institutionalized and better embedded in the organization as a priority. The **HRM strategy** as a whole needs to be elaborated since this remains unclear, as well as the salary scale. More specialized and strategic course could be organized for staff specifically involved in **resource mobilization** and cost recovery strategies, improving further the basic competencies acquired and strengthened through the trainings on budgeting and writing proposals. The **M&E team** is operational but needs further strengthening. There is a basis for M&E now and this basis needs further institutionalization. Regarding **governance of the board**, technical and professional skills of board members can be further improved as well as the functioning of the ST Committee and how the agenda is being managed.

The training program/coaching as a whole

In general the training program has been well received by CORAF and CILSS and has significantly contributed to increased knowledge and skills in a number of domains. To

improve future training programs recommendations focus on improving both the **process aspects** (identification, preparation execution and follow up of the training) and **content related aspects**.

The concept and purpose of **coaching** could be better clarified, as well as the linkage (or not) with the training program.

The revolving internship program

Most of the interns interviewed expressed their satisfaction on how they were received at CORAF and CILSS. They mentioned to have sharpened their technical, problem solving, social and communication skills while working at CORAF/CILSS. Almost 80 percent of the interns interviewed believe that the internship program is a great stepping stone for their future careers.

CORAF and CILSS staff believe that the revolving internship program has contributed significantly to the functioning of both organizations in the fields of HRM, IT, knowledge management, communication/public relations and monitoring and evaluation. Interns have brought modernity and new techniques into CORAF and CILSS.

It is strongly recommended to continue the internship program. Some aspects of the program could be optimized e.g. logistics, clarifying roles and objectives, communication, engagement of different departments and coaching and guidance of interns after having finished their internship.

The NARS visitors program

The NARS visitor program is a program aimed at helping to improve work and collaboration between the CORAF secretariat and its NARS stakeholders through a month-long opportunity to learn and exchange on CORAF policies and procedures.

NARS visitors have appreciated this exchange program: over 80% found the program practically useful and almost 80% mentioned that their initial expectations have been met.

Recommendations to improve the quality of future similar programs refer to improvement of the guidance of NARS visitors after the program, the optimization of the program content, the planning and overall time of the program and the exchange with CORAF during the visit. It should be ensured that the NARS staff participating in the program have the required abilities and mandate to be in the position to improve the NARS-CORAF relationship and collaboration after the conclusion of the program.

Interviews with CORAF staff have shown that the NARS institutions are likely to improve their collaboration with the Executive Secretariat and that project coordinators within the NARS have increasing responsibilities in the implementation of projects. This responds to the recommendation of the 2011 Assessment of USAID that CORAF's coordination mandate and shift of project coordination towards the NARS should be maximized, decreasing centralized implementation.

Introduction

Background

Africa Lead is a program sponsored by the U.S. government's Agency for International Development (USAID). Africa Lead operates across Sub-Saharan Africa from two regional offices – East and West Africa. Working across public, civil society, university and private sector institutions, Africa Lead seeks to ensure that leaders are trained to maintain a critical mass of food security “Champions” who will drive agriculture-led development by leading and implementing the Regional and National Agriculture Investment Plans within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) framework.

Last year, MDF West Africa assisted Africa Lead with the execution of the “Bridge Capacity Development Program (BCDP) for two of the three organizations in the program: CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel), CORAF /WECARD (West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development) and ECOWAS. With this program, Africa Lead aims to improve the organizational effectiveness of the three organizations, strengthen their capacity to develop, implement and evaluate policies and programs affecting agricultural productivity.

Different capacity building activities have taken place under this program:

- Short Course design and delivery executed by different training providers (total 19 trainings)
- Follow-up coaching and technical assistance to target institutions
- Internship program (10 persons, 10 months each)
- NARS staff Visitor's program (3 persons per month for a stay of 1 month, during 6 months: total 18 persons)

MDF West Africa was assigned as one of the service providers for strengthening staff and for coaching (analysis and support on the spot after training). MDF WA coordinated, prepared and executed 7 training programs (ranging from 3 – 5 days) and providing coaching on different subjects, in collaboration with MDF Afrique Centrale (DRC), RECORD (Togo) and IMCSarl (Burkina Faso) for CORAF and CILSS. Materials were provided for all subjects including training documents (file) and PowerPoint presentations in French.

Africa Lead requested assistance from MDF-WA to review the progress and status of the implementation of the BCDP and to document the institutional changes and impact that have resulted from the interventions of the program, lessons learned and to make recommendations for future programming. This review covers all the training and coaching services provided by training service providers as well as the young professional internship and NARS visitor's program.

Objectives of the assignment

The goal of the Bridge Capacity Development program is to promote institutional change and sustainable impact on the technical and operational efficiency of CORAF & CILSS. The main objective of the BCDP - is to address the recommendations outlined within the institutional assessments and evaluations carried out in May 2011 of CILSS and CORAF.

This review aims at identifying, analyzing, and then documenting to what extent the above mentioned objectives and activities have been realised regarding:

-
- What are the institutional changes that can be observed related to the organization?
 - What documents, systems and structures are needed to get the work done?
 - What changes can be observed at the personnel level as a result of increased resources addressing capacity gaps?
 - What changes (anecdotal/qualitative/quantitative) can be observed or are felt by staff?
 - What were the lessons learned from implementation?

The result of this review is a comprehensive report documenting how the combination of interventions offered through the Bridge Capacity Development Programs has addressed the gaps, identified during the 2011 institutional assessments as well as lessons learned, and recommendations for future programming.

Methods used

A desk study was carried out to review and analyze all relevant documents: training reports, BCDP progress reports, a report on the internship program, and the NARS visitor program reports.

Furthermore staff from CORAF and CILSS were interviewed (see annex 2 and 3 for more details). The selection included staff who had participated in preferably more than one training. At the same time the team tried to ensure gender balance in selection of male and female respondents to the extent possible. The interviews were conducted on the spot at the offices of CORAF and CILSS in Dakar and Ouagadougou respectively. The team planned to organize both focus group discussions and some key interviews however due to restricted schedules and limited availability of staff at the time of the evaluation, it was decided to solely conduct interviews.

The team interviewed 9 out of the 10 interns who participated in the revolving internship program, and 50% of the participants of the NARS visitors program (9 of the 18 participants). These interviews were executed by Skype and telephone.

Tailored questionnaires were developed for the three different types of interviews (CORAF/CILSS staff, interns, NARS visitors).

Structure of the report

This document is divided into the following sections:

Part I of the report gives an overview of the **changes observed and documented at institutional and personnel level within CILSS and CORAF**. This part explains to which extent the different trainings and the internship program have had an effect on the functioning of both organizations.

We have made distinction between **immediate changes** taken place after the trainings/coaching and internship program, and **changes observed some time later** i.e. 6-12 months after the trainings/internship program (at the moment of the interviews). In this part of the report we also refer to the initial assessment by USAID in 2011, to give us insight into the extent the changes have contributed to reducing the gaps and needs identified during the 2011 assessment.

Immediate changes were tracked by the desk study (training reports and internship reports): this type of changes are related to immediate learning results at institutional and personal level: acquisition of knowledge, skills, changes in attitude, the development of action plans to

be discussed at institutional level, and an increased level of awareness on personal and institutional weaknesses that need to be addressed in the future etc.

Furthermore this part of the report also includes the contributions of the interns aimed at improving the functioning of CILSS and CORAF.

Changes observed some time after the trainings/coaching/internship and NARS visitors program have been documented by interviewing staff from both CORAF and CILSS. These kind of changes described in the report refer mainly to how staff perceived the changes at institutional and personnel levels as a result of the different BCDP components some time after they have taken place (6-12 months later).

Part II of the report is dedicated to **the revolving internship program** and the **NARS visitors program**.

The first section explains – based on interviews with participants of the internship program - how the revolving internship program has contributed to the acquisition of knowledge and expertise.

It further gives an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the internship program and makes recommendations on how to improve the program in the future, based on input coming from interviews with ex-interns and staff from CORAF and CILSS.

Part II also contains results of the assessment of the NARS visitors program based on interviews with participants of this program. The results reveal how this program has contributed to personal changes (NARS visitors) and institutional changes (NARS institutions and cooperation between NARS and CORAF).

This section of the report ends with an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the NARS visitors program and recommendations on how to improve the program in the future, based on interviews with ex-NARS visitors and CORAF staff.

Part III of the report presents a summary of the main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for the future.

PART 1: Changes at Personnel and Institutional level within CILSS and CORAF

1. CILSS

1.1. Introduction

This part explains to which extent the different trainings and the internship program have had an effect so far on the functioning of CILSS. An overview of the changes as an immediate result of the trainings and the internship program is presented, at institutional and personal level. This overview is based on the desk study of training and internship reports. As a point of departure we refer to the initial assessment by USAID in 2011, since we wanted to know to what extent the mentioned changes have contributed to reducing the gaps and needs coming out of this assessment.

Then we present an overview of the changes perceived by CILSS staff at the time of this assessment (August-September 2013). An external consultant, Ms. Gifty Narh interviewed CILSS staff in their office. Some interviews were done by phone. The list of interviewed persons can be found in Annex 3.

1.2. Changes as a result of training/coaching and revolving internship program

Communications/Knowledge Management

a. Point of departure

Based on the assessment carried out in 2011¹, it was recommended that the visibility and coordinating capacity of CILSS could be significantly improved by investing more resources in the communications outreach and knowledge management capability of the organization. There is a critical need to improve information sharing and collaborative efforts in research, training, and the diffusion of new technologies.

¹ Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

b. Immediate changes

The table below illustrates the changes at the institutional level, achieved in the field of communications/ knowledge management, which can be linked to the BCDP program of Africa Lead/USAID.

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at institutional level</i> |
|--|---|
| 1. Training efforts and technical assistance/coaching* | <p>Knowledge management/ databases: It is too soon to mention changes at the institutional level as a result of the training and technical assistance in the field of knowledge management and practices related to databases. The study related to these domains including recommendations on technical assistance, training and the development of an action plan took place earlier this year (report of June 2013, C2D).</p> <p>Communication/public relations: The training has inspired the participants to improve the communication plan of CILSS. At the end of the training participants expressed their wish to present the acquired tools to the management, in the presence of the trainers.</p> |
| 2. The internship program | <p>Knowledge capitalization/information sharing/database development/IT Several efforts were made by the interns to capitalize existing knowledge and experiences, through desk studies, literature reviews, field visits and interviews. Some interns mentioned that they put information online to enable exchange and sharing. This capitalization was not done at random but has served specific purposes. Contributions of the interns lie also in the field of IT: improvement of existing systems or development of new databases (see examples below):</p> <p>Examples: Some steps have been taken to develop an IT governance framework and improve the IT monitoring system. An intern has given suggestions for the improvement of the current electronic content management system, which has led to the decision to undertake a feasibility study in order to choose the most efficient and effective system.</p> <p>Knowledge capitalization on agricultural water management in the Sahel has enabled ongoing partnership between INSAH, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological institute, and the research project about water management in the Niger basin.</p> <p>Capitalizing experiences and achievements of CILSS in the field of water management in the Sahel (<i>ref. Acquis des recherches et pratiques sur les systems de production mixtes au Sahel</i>) should enable the definition of new policies, actions and projects in the fields of water and agricultural development.</p> <p>Information sharing: Collected and stored data on water, irrigation and agriculture in Niamey have been made available through online documentation. At the time of this review it was not clear if this has led to an increased use of this information so far.</p> <p>The report 'Acteurs et Instruments de gestion du système alimentaire et des risques climatiques en Afrique de l'Ouest' prepared by one of the interns should serve as a baseline document to discuss the implementation of a</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>regional partnership on food system and climate risk management in West Africa.</p> <p>Information has been made more accessible by promoting reports e.g. <i>charte pour la sécurité alimentaire</i>.</p> <p>Training on social media and web 2.0 incl. a report by several interns has made the CILSS staff more aware about how to improve the organization's visibility and the communication strategy. This has been well received by CILSS staff, because this training allows staff to stay in touch with the updated knowledge and skills.</p> <p>The creation of an internal blog is a result of the interns' contribution aimed at the promotion of knowledge exchange, the strengthening of the corporate culture and the improvement of the information flow internally.</p> <p>Interns have contributed to the use and development e.g. the creation of a database with data on trained people, and the development of a database with information on agricultural marketers in the West-African region. Furthermore the development of software has allowed loans to be managed in a better way by the librarian in the documentation center. At the same time it allows better functioning of the documentary database.</p> |
|--|---|

**see Annex 6: Summary of trainings*

| Components BCDP | Changes at personnel level |
|---|---|
| 1.Training efforts and technical assistance/coaching* | Interview results, not possible to get this info out of the training reports |
| 2.Internship program | N/A |

**see Annex 6: Summary of trainings*

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CILSS staff were asked to give a score from 1-4² based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on communication/knowledge management (see under a. 'point of departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score for communication/knowledge management was **2.68**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at **institutional level**):

² Score: 1= not at all/very little implemented; 2= to some extent implemented; 3= most of it implemented; 4= everything Implemented; N/A if interviewee doesn't know

Positive changes

- “We’ve come a long way; in less than two years”. Giant steps have been taken forward.;
- There is willingness to boost communication and knowledge management;
- A considerable improvement and diversification of communication channels like social networks, skype, improved website,...can be shown, and soon also video conferencing device will be implemented with the support of a Canadian project, including the installment of a reception room to showcase the achievements (use of a window), development of brochures, banners, signs;
- ‘sleeping projects’ have been re-activated like the electronic document management one;
- What can be observed are the breaking down of internal communication barriers, a better flow of information, more regular meetings extended to all experts, improved interpersonal communication at the level of managers vis-à-vis employees, staff communicating more through internet platforms and networks, a better communication on technical products;
- A strategic communication plan has been put in place.
- The Council of Ministers has congratulated CILSS for the quality of documents submitted.

Remaining challenges

- Little progress has been made because of the limited resources to finance corporate communication;
- Communication channels used are not always adapted/suitable yet;
- Progress is slow because of the lack of a specific budget for communication and the absence of a communication officer since late 2011. CILSS uses interns mainly to work on this topic (2 interns so far);
- The need for a good communication plan with a major funding plan to enable publication of CILSS’ expertise persists.

Changes at **personnel level**, (+-) one year after having received training/coaching can be summarized as follows:

| BCDP components | Changes at personnel level |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Training on Communication | <p>At the end of the training, participants revealed that they are able now to identify the interests of their colleagues in a more proactive way, resulting in the provision of information in accordance with their needs.</p> <p>Other improvements mentioned were the daily communication with colleagues and surroundings, the increased ability to pinpoint communication problems in the team, the development of a wider perspective on aspects of corporate communication and an increased capability to develop a strategy / communication plan.</p> |

Human Resource Management

a. Point of departure

The assessment of 2011 has revealed that more competitive salary scales should be supported. Creative mechanisms to introduce a viable junior cadre internship program across all three CILSS institutions should be explored, staff development opportunities to increase access to new skills in research methodology should be improved, as well as modelling, diagnostic tools and frameworks, software, database access, etc.³

b. Immediate changes

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at institutional level</i> |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Training and technical assistance* | <p>As an immediate training result, participants have developed an <i>action plan to improve HR practices at the institutional level</i>. This action plan should contribute to the improvement of strategic HR topics like e.g. the elaboration of a performance framework 2013 for staff including SMART performance indicators, a better integration of a training policy, placement of an HR officer for the 3 sites together, and the assessment and improvement of the legal and administrative situation of staff.</p> <p>More <i>operational points of improvement</i> stated by the participants are e.g. giving feedback on performance of staff, installing and strengthening of PME meetings on performance, the encouragement of top management to follow this training as well, the systematization of the new staff induction, and taking into account staff competencies while managing staff.</p> |
| 2. Internship program | <p>The examples given by the interns regarding their contribution to CILSS, fall almost all within the area of <i>systematizing approaches, development of supportive guidelines and templates</i>. The analysis of key jobs (positions?) or functions could be seen as a contribution or a step towards more competitive salary scales though this has not been mentioned very explicitly. No contributions have been mentioned on a viable junior cadre internship program and staff development.</p> <p>Examples: <i>The analysis of key jobs</i> within CILSS has served several purposes for e.g. the identification of critical functions for the organization, balancing resource needs taking into account the strategic orientation of CILSS, and the definition of a suitable employment policy.</p> <p>Interns have also contributed to the development of an <i>integration guide</i> as a supportive tool for new employees.</p> <p>Furthermore there were contributions to improve <i>the staff evaluation forms</i> aimed at improving and better facilitation of the documentation on staff progress and performance.</p> |

*see Annex 6: Summary of trainings

³ Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

| Components BCDP | Changes at personnel level |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1.Training and technical assistance* | At the end of the training on HRM , participants mentioned that they will pay more attention to both HR system oriented aspects and to people management topics or that they will change their behaviour e.g. by anticipating and planning more than before, by increasing teamwork, or by improving communication with staff. |
| 2.Internship program | N/A |

*See Annex 6: Summary of the HR training course

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CILSS staff were asked to give a score from 1-4⁴ based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on HR management (see under a. 'point of departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score given was **1.63**. Interviewees explained the reason for this rather low score as follows (mainly changes at **institutional level**):

Positive changes

- A step forward has been set with relaunching of the staff appraisal

Remaining challenges

- HRM remains *status quo* because of the absence of a dedicated Human Resource Manager for more than 2 years now. Human resources are not properly managed. This hampers the implementation and execution of an effective and efficient HR system which frustrates a lot of staff;
- The salary grid is still not motivating staff;
- Tools on HRM are outdated and still not implemented after having them for more than 3 years now e.g. the personnel statute, a motivation/incentive plan, a proper training and career management;
- Much work remains to be done;
- Staff turnover continues because of a weak HRM (e.g.no career and development plan).

At the **institutional level**, interviewees mentioned that - as a result of the training and coaching they received – the development of job descriptions is ongoing, as well as the implementation of an internal recruitment procedures for hiring a specific category of staff (maintenance) without the need to involve an external firm.

Changes at **personnel level**, (+-) one year after having received training/coaching can be summarized as follows:

| BCDP components | Changes at personnel level |
|------------------------|---|
| Training on HRM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renewed confidence to launch initiatives - More involvement in HRM |

⁴ Score: 1= not at all/very little implemented; 2= to some extent implemented; 3= most of it implemented; 4= everything Implemented; N/A if interviewee doesn't know

Resource Mobilization

a. Point of departure

Establishing a proactive fund raising unit, building capacity for proposal writing, grant tracking, registration on donor list serves for RFA/Ps, foundation registries, soliciting public-private sector partnerships and the introduction of more aggressive strategies of cost recovery are recommendations that have been formulated based on the 2011 Assessment.⁵

b. Immediate changes

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at the institutional level</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1.Training and technical assistance* | <p>The training course on budgeting provides a good starting basis for Fund mobilization. The training results of this course have built capacities mainly in the field of preparing a budget, bringing the budget in line with donor/stakeholder requirements, paying attention to budget monitoring, budget analysis and financial reporting. In itself this does not always lead to increased fund raising but it can contribute to more awareness on the importance of good financial management, providing a good starting point for fund raising activities.</p> <p>The training course on “proposal writing” was meant to develop and improve the skills and knowledge in resource mobilization by developing good quality project proposals and by increasing staff’s capacity to identify funding opportunities. The training report shows that participants were confused about whether a resource mobilization strategy existed or not. Some thought there was a strategy while others were sure it doesn’t exist yet. The training brought forth these contradictory ideas.</p> <p>Furthermore they suggested that recommendations, formulated by a consultant in an earlier report on Resource Mobilization for CILSS (2009) should be followed up on.</p> |
| 2.Internship program | No interns participating in the revolving internship program have contributed to improving resource mobilization at CILSS. |

*see Annex 6: Summary of trainings

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at the personnel level</i> |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1.Training and technical assistance* | At the end of the training on Budgeting , participants mentioned that they will pay more attention to the way budgets are/should be elaborated with respect for donor requirements. Others stated they will respect the budgeting process, and categorize standard costs used by USAID while adopting a critical and reflective attitude when categorizing these costs. |

⁵ Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

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|----------------------|---|
| | Other examples of increased skills and knowledge lie in the field of comparing budget and real results; identifying budgetary problems and finding solutions; involving all staff and relevant stakeholders at the appropriate moment in the project cycle to ensure that budgeting can play its function in each phase of the project and that it is not elaborated in an isolated way; ensuring a good work attitude between donors and practitioners to guarantee a good coherence between financial reports and activities, and adopting an attitude for closing financial business on a monthly basis so that financial tendencies become more visible in relation to executed activities |
| 2.Internship program | NA |

*see Annex 6: Summary of trainings

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CILSS staff were asked to give a score from 1-4⁶ based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on Fund Mobilization (see under a. 'point of departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score given was **2.14**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at **institutional level**):

Positive changes

- There are capacities in place to mobilize resources;
- Steps have been taken by the Executive Secretariat towards Niger to pay 80% of their contribution arrears and other measures are underway to mobilize contributions from other countries;
- New partnerships are being signed, major projects are under negotiation; a lot of efforts are done to answer call for proposals;
- A gradual return of former donors can be noticed.

Remaining challenges

- There is still a lack of a permanent mechanism for resource mobilization;
- Substantial resources are allocated to the programs, but the institution itself remains poor due to inadequate country contributions;
- CILSS has no funding problems but faces rather a problem regarding consumption of the allocated budgets.

Changes at **personnel level**, (+-) one year after having received training/coaching can be summarized as follows:

| BCDP components | Changes at personnel level |
|--|--|
| 1. Training on Proposal writing | The training has equipped staff in writing a proposal in view of CILSS' 40 years celebration. Participants also mentioned improved abilities to develop inputs for employees who are responsible for developing projects. |
| 2.Training on Budget Development and Management | There is more control now on USAID procedures e.g. eligible expenditure. Awareness has increased on the need to integrate both operational and financial budgeting in order to ensure consistency between the operating plan and budget. |

⁶ Score: 1= not at all/very little implemented; 2= to some extent implemented; 3= most of it implemented; 4= everything Implemented; N/A if interviewee doesn't know

Monitoring and Evaluation

a. Point of departure

Recommendations⁷ related to Monitoring and Evaluation can be summarized as follows: CILSS should fulfill its original plan to establish at least one full-time dedicated person in INSAH and AGRHYMET, respectively. CILSS should integrate M&E databases, reporting functions, and information cataloguing across the three institutions by establishing a virtual M&E working unit on one centralized portal site (such as [rmportal.net](#)) where M&E managers can work collaboratively using online interactive tools.

b. Immediate changes

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at institutional level</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Training and technical assistance* | N/A |
| 2. Internship program | Interns have contributed to improve performance of M&E by designing a dashboard on Excel providing a global vision on the performance of all ongoing projects, with the possibility to see in-depth information per project and to analyze financial performance indicators. The last part has not been adopted by the staff; the first part has been used in writing a report on the institutional status and perspectives for the Ministry of Agriculture in Chad. Another contribution has been the development of several periodical reports for USAID , particularly the results framework. |

*See Annex 6: Summary trainings

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at personnel level</i> |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Training and technical assistance* | <p>At the end of the training on RBM, participants mentioned that they will pay more attention to the 'soft' aspects of RBM like e.g. being flexible, open and ready to change 'hats', and reflecting outside their own comfort zone. Furthermore people mentioned they have learnt to be more positive and to listen more attentively.</p> <p>Regarding the 'harder' aspects of RBM, participants indicated at the end of the training that they will apply RBM at all levels of their own professional activities whenever possible. They are now able to improve/revise the logical framework at the objective/result level and to monitor periodically progress and to adjust whatever needed. Likewise they have learnt to improve program monitoring with the RBM method and to develop a factsheet summarizing projects per result.</p> <p>At the end of the training on evaluation, participants stated that they have</p> |

⁷ Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

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| | <p>learnt to use the indicators for their own individual annual performance plan and to use the Most Significant Change method. They indicated that they are now able to use the Terms of Reference (ToR) for impact evaluation, to improve/revise indicators and to expect more reaction from leading officers when ToR are spread amongst them. Participants mentioned also to have developed abilities to use Terms of Reference (ToR) to evaluate policies and to use evaluation criteria as a dash board. At the same time they indicated that they will be able to improve the development of evaluation criteria for evaluation reports, as well as cooperation with other staff and stakeholders at when designing programs and selecting indicators.</p> |
| 2. Internship program | N/A |

*See Annex 6: Summary trainings

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CILSS staff were asked to give a score from 1-4 based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on Monitoring and Evaluation (see under a. 'point of departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score given was **3**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at ***institutional level***):

Positive changes

- The M&E team has been strengthened with the recruitment of two experts in monitoring and evaluation for the executive secretariat and an expert on each site;
- The M&E team has become more proactive and effective;
- The quality of monitoring has improved which has resulted in better quality reports;
- Tools to monitor on a quarterly basis are operational and can now be used by the different sites;
- Databases have been developed that can be used for M&E.

Remaining challenges

- Much remains to be done: there are still delays in the production of reports, there is still little or no systematic and permanent follow up, and organization of tasks between the members of the M&E team still needs to be improved.

Changes at ***personnel level***, (+/-) one year after having received training/coaching can be summarized as follows:

| BCDP components | Changes at personnel level |
|--|---|
| 1. Training on <i>advanced leadership</i> | <p>Participants indicated at the end of the training that they are now able to improve their relations with employees and to show a more critical attitude towards what others should do. Someone committed to be a champion of change and someone else mentioned to have acquired better knowledge on how to set goals and how to maintain them.</p> <p>Some participants stated that they will try to change their environment trying to bring others in the same dynamic and that more efforts will be done to develop a team spirit. Others mentioned that they have learned to delegate more to their colleagues which will allow them to reduce time spent on operational activities so they can focus more on strategic issues. Someone mentioned to set up more communication with operational staff, encouraging</p> |

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|----------------------------------|--|
| | <p>them to approach him/her and allowing a better understanding of what they do. Others indicated they will value and to put forward staff more than before.</p> |
| 2. Training on RBM | <p>Staff members participating in the RBM training said that at the end of the training they will focus on working in a more result-oriented way instead of working without questioning its impact. Others cited they've gained new insights e.g. targeting the results gives more meaning to the job and thus increased motivation and RBM results in an increased efficiency and effectiveness of work.</p> |
| 3. Training on M&E | <p>The training has resulted in a better understanding of the planning documents, including the results and indicators which are better defined now. According to them, staff are more able to develop an end-to-end strategic plan including the monitoring and evaluation sheet. It was also stated that the developed evaluation questionnaire is used now for the operational plan of CILSS making reference to the assessment criteria acquired during the M&E training</p> |
| 4. Training on evaluation | <p>The training on evaluation has equipped participants with more knowledge on how to design an intervention, and how to focus more on the changes to be promoted. It seems that people tend to evaluate their work easier than they did before. A participant mentioned to coach colleagues to get them going beyond the activities, while another participant put new emphasis on the correct formulation of indicators because of the importance of good evaluation through appropriate indicators.</p> |

Executive Secretariat

a. Point of departure

It was recommended in the 2011 Assessment⁸ to streamline the administrative functions of the ES to allow for more decision making and management autonomy of technical managers in INSAH and AGRHYMET.

b. Immediate changes

Changes at the level of the Executive Secretariat fall under the responsibility of the Executive Board. The BCDP program had no authority to suggest or propose changes nor did develop any specific programs to address these recommendations.

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CILSS staff were asked to give a score from 1-4⁹ based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations regarding the Executive Secretariat (see under a. 'point of

⁸ Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score given was **2.57**; interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at ***institutional level***):

Positive changes and Remaining challenges

- Autonomous management by the specialized sites is effective like the autonomy to negotiate programs with partners, the decentralized management of programs like the PRA water control in Niamey and the PRA Market Access in Bamako, the establishment of direct relations with the donors etc. Interviewees mentioned that some supervision by the Executive Secretariat (ES) remains necessary;
- 90% of projects are transferred to the sites, but the cost of managing these projects are shared between the sites and the ES. This causes friction sometimes because the sites believe they are responsible for the results while the ES ensures 'only' the political dimension and overall coordination of joint programs;
- Management of the autonomy granted to the site is sometimes excessive because sites tend to break their ties with the secretariat;
- A workshop is foreseen to clarify and reframe the relationship between the ES and the specialized agencies.

⁹ Score: 1= not at all/very little implemented; 2= to some extent implemented; 3= most of it implemented; 4= everything Implemented; N/A if interviewee doesn't know

2. CORAF

2.1. Introduction

This part explains to which extent the different trainings and the internship program have had an effect so far on the functioning of CORAF. First we give an overview of the changes as an immediate result of the trainings and/ or internship program, at the institutional and the personnel level, based on the desk study of training reports and internship reports. As a point of departure we refer to the initial Assessment by USAID in 2011, since we wanted to know to which extent the mentioned changes have contributed to reducing the gaps and addressing the needs raised in the assessment.

We present the changes perceived by CORAF staff at the time of the assessment (August-September 2013). An external consultant, Ms. Gifty Narh interviewed CORAF staff in their office in Dakar. Some interviews were conducted by phone. The list of the interviewed persons can be found in Annex 2.

2.2. Changes as a result of training and coaching, the revolving internship program and the NARS visitors program

Communication and knowledge management

a. Point of departure

Based on the assessment carried out in 2011¹⁰, it was recommended that a Knowledge Management resource person should be dedicated to create a web-based, market-driven knowledge management system and efficiently coordinate scientific research.

b. Immediate changes

The table below illustrates the changes at the institutional level, achieved in the field of communications and knowledge management, which can be linked to the BCDP program of Africa Lead/USAID.

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at institutional level</i> |
|---|---|
| 1. Training efforts and technical assistance/coaching | Knowledge management/ databases: It is too soon to mention changes at the institutional level as a result of training/technical assistance in the field of knowledge management and practices related to databases. The study related to these domains including recommendations on technical assistance, training and the development of an action plan has taken place in June 2013, (C2D Report). The recommendations have not yet been implemented. |

¹⁰ Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

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|--------------------------|---|
| 2.The internship program | <p>Communication/ knowledge management/IT</p> <p>Several efforts have been undertaken by interns to develop social media tools (e.g. Face book, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia page and YouTube), to support report writing (annual report), article writing (website and newsletter) and editing. With the help of the interns the main website was upgraded. This contributed to almost double the number of visitors in a period of 6 months. The creation of maps and graphs helped to showcase CORAF project locations. These interventions have certainly contributed to increase the institution's visibility and online presence.</p> <p>Furthermore an intern has undertaken the business analysis process for the Intranet system and has participated in the process of building a comprehensive knowledge management system. Both processes were in the stage of hiring external expertise at the time of the internship program thus they are still in a relatively early stage of development.</p> <p>At the same time contributions have been made to improving communication at the program level e.g. of WAAPP and WASP.</p> |
|--------------------------|---|

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CORAF staff were asked to give a score from 1-4¹¹ based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on communication and knowledge management (see under a. 'point of departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score for communication/knowledge management was **3**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at institutional level):

¹¹ Score: 1= not at all/very little implemented; 2= to some extent implemented; 3= most of it implemented; 4= everything Implemented; N/A if interviewee doesn't know

Knowledge management:

- Awareness is increasing on the importance of knowledge management for the institution e.g. there is an audit on knowledge management going on;
- There is an increased awareness that the sustainability of CORAF is related to knowledge management;
- The development of a program to manage knowledge as a system has isolated KM within the organization; the position/place of KM within the organization is not clear yet;
- Evaluation of the program on knowledge management has been done but it is difficult to find real experts in the field to help us move forward
- The knowledge management system is not yet in place; it will take some time to see results;
- It is foreseen to develop a strategy for knowledge management and to assign KM responsibilities to someone but so far no results are visible yet;
- Recruitment of someone to manage knowledge is going on, but to date, no concrete results are yet visible.

Communication:

- Staff is more aware that making more use of social media improves the visibility of CORAF
- Staff understand that communication on results can be improved by using a number of success stories;
- Interviewees find the website more attractive and the intranet more functional than before;
- Information flow from CORAF to NARS on activities goes more smoothly;
- There is a frequent mobilization of the press at large-scale events;
- Many publications on the results of projects are prepared;
- Preparation of booklets on each program and manufacturing/production of films on results is done;
- Portals have been created on various initiatives with various donors;
- The communication plan has been revised by the Executive Director and NARS with support of a firm;
- Each program revises its communication plan now;
- Interns have helped to improve the communication tools;
- Important communication tools (video conferencing, etc.) have been acquired.

Human Resource Management

a. Point of departure

The assessment of 2011 revealed the necessity of fast-tracking HR initiatives with the assistance of a consultant to better and more efficiently implement Human resources policies. A short-term human resource expert could assist the current HR manager in fast-tracking the HR policy by improving the system of performance evaluations, by establishing appropriate travel insurance and by ensuring that contracts are up-to-date and are legally sound.¹²

¹² Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

b. Immediate changes

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at institutional level</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Training and technical assistance* | <p>As an immediate training result, participants have developed an action plan to improve HR practices at the institutional level. In the action plan staff recommended more respect and better disclosure of existing policies. HR policies and transparency regarding these policies should be improved further. Another recommendation was to foresee a specific HR function and to make sure everybody has a job description and defined performance objectives. A communication system regarding HR procedures and HR issues in general should be put in place and the HR strategy should be promoted.</p> <p>At the same time it is needed to reinforce competency development, to monitor better the training results acquired by staff. The evaluation system should be improved and a more formal system should be established to enable feedback and coaching so that staff can actually give and ask for feedback.</p> |
| 2. Internship program | <p>The examples given by the interns regarding their contribution to CORAF fall well within the scope of the recommendations mentioned below (point c), specifically regarding contributions to HR policies, procedures and system.</p> <p>Examples: Interns have contributed to improving the official job descriptions in order to clarify the responsibilities of each employee and customers/suppliers relationship within the organization.</p> <p>The HR policies and procedures manual has been reviewed and updated, including the development of a new performance appraisal form with a communication plan for the HR officer. The recruitment process was optimized including the length of the process, renewal of the interview guides and development of tests.</p> <p>An HR Information system was developed together with the Database and HR assistant to allow CORAF to keep all personal/professional information online updated including personnel file management, family insurance, leave and absences, professional performance tracking. This system serves as an information tracking system.</p> |

*see Annex 6: Summary of trainings

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at personnel level</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Training and technical assistance* | <p>At the end of the training on HRM, participants mentioned that they have gained knowledge/skills about performance and competency management. There is a positive intention to give more feedback and coaching in the future to support performance. Conflict management and active listening were also mentioned as acquired skills. Moreover participants indicated they better understand the difference between a job profile and job description, what a job classification means and how to prioritize training based on criteria. Awareness has also been raised about strengths and weaknesses on HR at the institutional level, the different HR roles and the need to have HR policies in place.</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 2. Internship program | N/A |
|-----------------------|-----|

*See Annex 6: Summary of the HR training course

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CORAF staff were asked to give a score from 1-4¹³ based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 assessment recommendations on HRM (see under a. 'point of departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score was **3.15**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at **institutional level**):

Positive changes

- Many things are moving like the creation of an HR assistant position, improvement of the HRM system and an improved working environment for staff (travel insurance, health insurance); this can be further enhanced and extended;
- The recruitment of a consultant is going on to strengthen HRM;
- New and more adjusted HR tools have been developed including the revision of the HR manual and staff performance evaluation;
- The executive director takes questions on HR seriously and efforts are made to find solutions for remaining problems;
- At meetings and retreats, staff express themselves more openly now; questions on personnel can be discussed and tools already in place are more appreciated by staff;
- Many things have changed, even if temporary contracts and the salary scale are still to be clarified;
- Most interviewees mentioned that HR is the unit where the changes are most visible;
- Giving information to staff has been improved;
- Holidays are better organized;
- Improvement in working conditions and conditions of access to certain benefits (health insurance)
- New tools have been developed and existing tools have been revised like e.g.:
 - o Job descriptions explaining the duties and responsibilities of each staff member
 - o Leave Management
 - o A form for gathering information on state of hygiene and work safety
 - o Score cards on medical benefits and health insurance (previously it was dealt with informally)
 - o An administrative interface that allows staff to have an overview on the activities of colleagues
 - o Fire safety card
 - o Good internal purchasing, including a database for staff
 - o Evaluation templates for staff
 - o Revision of the HRM Manual
- Human resources are better managed; management knows how to get the best out of their staff;
- There is more team spirit and collaboration between units and departments: e.g. staff members are more involved in planning activities of the department, which allows for better planning of their own interventions, and it ensures that all activities are covered in an efficient way;
- The establishment of an "HR Support" staff has enabled staff to get more rights;
- The introduction of a weekly coffee break where staff can gather to discuss, exchange views on current affairs, has resulted in a more relaxed working atmosphere;
- Improved relationships between staff members have been noticed, with more exchanges, mutual listening and tolerance of different opinions.

Remaining challenges:

- HR/ the HR assistant should fall directly under the executive director aimed at giving the function more responsibilities and decision making power;
- Many efforts have been made but the HRM strategy within CORAF needs to be clarified more.

Changes at **personnel level**, (+/-) one year after training/coaching can be summarized as follows:

| BCDP components | Changes at personnel level |
|------------------------|---|
| Training on HRM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback has become more common between colleagues; - People listen to others, and show more interest and are curious about what others are doing. Some participants know how to communicate better; - The sense of teamwork has been strengthened: <i>"I take into account the opinions of each other, I don't impose my own views anymore"</i>; - There is a better understanding of the rights and duties of staff; - Some staff members mentioned that they read more carefully their contract and endeavor to meet the requirements of the job; - Someone mentioned that job descriptions and salaries were renegotiated because of a better understanding of employees' rights and duties. |

Resource mobilization

a. Point of departure

Exploring creative income-generation mechanisms to offset donor dependency is the main recommendation related to fund mobilization that has been formulated based on the 2011 Assessment.¹⁴

Despite CORAF's progress in improving fundraising efforts, its programs are still heavily donor dependent. Key staff and core activities are not financially secured should there be any funding gaps from donors. As an organization, CORAF offers services that could generate internal funds.

b. Immediate results of different BCDP components

| Components BCDP | Changes at institutional level |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Training and technical assistance* | The training on "writing proposals" was clearly focused on the process of how to increase skills and knowledge on Resource Mobilization by means of developing project proposals of sound quality and by increasing staff's capacities to identify financial opportunities. This has led participants to formulate recommendations on how to further strengthen the resource mobilization strategy of CORAF and partnering institutions (recommendations can be found under c) summary training 'writing proposals'). |
| 2. Internship program | No interns from the revolving internship program have contributed to improve resource mobilization within CORAF. |

*see Annex 6: Summary of trainings

¹⁴ Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

| Components BCDP | Changes at personnel level |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1.Training and technical assistance* | <p>At the end of the training on Writing Proposals, participants stated that awareness on their responsibility to mobilize funds has been raised. It has become clearer how to develop a resource mobilization strategy. Skills regarding the quality of the project proposal of a research project including how it should look like have been strengthened.</p> <p>Participants will also invest in developing more project proposals on research responding to various calls for proposals and in bringing project teams into practice. Some stated that a team will be created to manage research and a database with project proposals. Others recommended the creation of a formal committee to follow up on funding opportunities.</p> |
| 2.Internship program | N/A |

*see Annex 6: Summary of trainings

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CORAF staff were asked to give a score from 1-4¹⁵ based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on Fund Mobilization (see under a. 'point of departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score was **2.33**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at institutional level):

Positive changes

- The WAPP is a mechanism that helps to strengthen the capital base of CORAF (+- 30% of the financial income now): translation of the WAPP into a business model is underway and will ultimately strengthen the financial autonomy and sustainability of the institution;
- A reserve fund supplies the basis of funds collected; and the aim is to ensure financial autonomy to cover at least 3 months of the operational costs of CORAF;
- The executive director works on lobbying to mobilize resources for CORAF.

Remaining challenges

- New mechanisms for mobilizing resources need to be sought;
- HRM needs to be adjusted to suit the financial means, in order to overcome the current euphoria;
- Discussions have been initiated which did not result in concrete mechanisms for mobilizing funds;
- Reserve funds are not yet fully operational;
- NARS are not up to date with their contributions.

¹⁵ Score: 1= not at all/very little implemented; 2= to some extent implemented; 3= most of it implemented; 4= everything Implemented; N/A if interviewee doesn't know

Monitoring and Evaluation

a. Point of departure

Recommendations¹⁶ related to Monitoring and Evaluation can be summarized as follows: The current M&E system should migrate to a more sophisticated database that is capable of storing project deliverables and outputs across a long period of time. The assessment team also advises that reporting formats, indicator tables, activity tables, and deliverables tables be simplified and organized, as opposed to being grouped together.

b. Immediate results of different BCDP components

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at institutional level</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1.Training and technical assistance* | <p>Participants of the M&E training have become more aware that the current M&E system needs to be improved and how this can be done (see also Annex 6: Summary training M&E).</p> <p>Staff from CORAF and associate research institutions participating in the combined training on RBM and Leadership (both the separate trainings on RBM1 and 2 and the combined training RBM and Leadership) have raised awareness about changes at institutional level (see also Annex 6: Summary training RBM1+2 and Summary training RBM+Leadership);</p> |
| 2.Internship program | <p>Interns have contributed to a better performance of M&E by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) supporting the review of logical frameworks and M&E plans for e.g. the 4P program; 2) supporting the development of the data collection sheet for the Feed the Future Monitoring System of CORAF, and supporting program data collection of the FTF program; 3) supporting the implementation of the CORAF data quality plan; 4) setting up a database and preparing the Data Quality Assessment for the USAID program called GFSRI by compiling and classifying data on this program, including giving a presentation during a workshop organized by the M&E team to sensitize the GFSRI staff on data quality. |

*See Annex 6: Summary trainings

| <i>Components BCDP</i> | <i>Changes at personnel level</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1.Training and technical assistance* | <p>At the end of the trainings related to "Monitoring and Evaluation" participants mentioned they have gained new knowledge and skills on M&E for example there is a better understanding about the PMP toolkit and about how to define indicators. The concept of the indicators was clarified including the link with the results. Furthermore it has become clear that documents should be kept up to date. Participants indicated that a M&E</p> |

¹⁶ Ref. West Africa Institutional Assessment CILSS, USAID – 2011.

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|----------------------|--|
| | <p>framework and plan for each project of WAAPP in collaboration with involved actors should be developed and executed. Nevertheless it was also stated that M&E and more specifically the M&E officer should play a 'watchdog' role.</p> <p>At the end of the trainings related to "RBM and Leadership", participants stated that the training was useful to bring into practice the qualities of a leader and to use the 8 steps of Kotter to become a change oriented leader. Other insights referred to the need to have a vision, to make sure there is a 'sense of urgency' to act efficiently and effectively, and to take into account all relevant actors when developing a strategic vision.</p> <p>Some participants liked the participatory approach towards team work whereby the team is considered to act as a partner with accountability responsibilities. An eye-opener for some participants was that RBM is not only the responsibility of leaders but that it is more related to developing an overall attitude of accountability and a result-oriented way of thinking. Another learning point was that RBM creates more transparency between actors playing a role in a project/program.</p> <p>Furthermore participants mentioned that the course helped them improve their abilities to set strategic priorities, to account for results from the start of a project in order to be a good champion, and to understand better the conceptualization of RBM linked to the Paris declaration of 2005.</p> <p>Training results of the RBM1 have resulted in staff moving outside their own comfort zone allowing new ways of working and behaving (as stated by participants at the end of the training). A staff member mentioned changing the way activities are evaluated in the future: <i>"I will question myself more about my responsibilities regarding expectations on results"</i></p> |
| 2.Internship program | N/A |

*See Annex 6: Summary trainings

c. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

CORAF staff were asked to give a score from 1-4¹⁷ based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on Monitoring and Evaluation (see under a. 'point of departure' above) have been put into practice so far. The average score was **2.35**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly **changes at institutional level**):

¹⁷ Score: 1= not at all/very little implemented; 2= to some extent implemented; 3= most of it implemented; 4= everything Implemented; N/A if interviewee doesn't know

Positive changes

- There is a political will to improve M&E;
- The establishment and restructuring of the M&E unit, meant to show progress on the results, proves that the system is no longer in an embryonic stage;
- Strengthening and reorganization of the M&E team has been realized including the recruitment of new staff with assigned M&E tasks and responsibilities;
- Capacity building of the person in charge of the database has taken place;
- There is more awareness in general on how to formulate indicators in a correct way;
- More and more people are critical about the formulation of results;
- The sense of individual responsibility for achieving results has been strengthened;
- Elimination of barriers between departments has taken place resulting in better communication and collaboration;
- Before the concepts of RBM were not shared by all project managers so it was difficult to get tools, now all adhere to RBM which has helped to overcome resistance in the application of tools with a focus on results;
- Monitoring and evaluation is better organized now including the recruitment of two people and new hires are as planned.

Remaining challenges

- Procedures and tools are okay but the M&E team is not yet effective enough;
- There still exists a lot of resistance regarding M&E, a poor attitude on M&E which prevails over the attitude to improve M&E further. The M&E team needs to be strengthened further.

Changes at **personnel level**, (+-) one year after having received training/coaching can be summarized as follows:

| BCDP components | Changes at personnel level |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Training on RBM* | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Some staff apply the content learned in preparing TOR and concept notes;- There is a general acceptance about the importance of formulating objectives and refining the indicators;- SMART criteria are now used for the definition of indicators in the work plan (AWP);- There is a more demanding attitude towards the formulation of results in the examination of documents and reports;- People know better the difference between a "result" and an activity- People organize better their message on RBM in discussions with colleagues;- Someone mentioned the importance of teamwork: <i>"I no longer focus only on my own results but I put the team ahead, I cite all those who have contributed and that motivates and mobilizes more colleagues"</i>;- Much remains to be done to capture RBM: the definition of outcomes and indicators on PTBA2 was stormy as the positions were different in the team; mentoring / coaching is essential. |
| 2. Training on Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improvements are being made on communication with others e.g. (stated by an interviewee): <i>"I know how to talk to people, how to listen, pay attention to how my interlocutor understands what I tell him"</i>;- More importance is given to time management;- Some staff members are more proactive, and look more prepared for the activities of the upcoming months. |

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 3. Training on <i>M&E</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning tools have been implemented; - Having no basic knowledge on monitoring and evaluation before the training, some staff are now mindful of the need to monitor and evaluate any action; - The learning outcomes translated into the development of an M&E system for projects on non-timber forest products accompanied by a budget and a plan for communicating the results. |
|-------------------------------|--|

Governance of the Board

a. Point of departure

The BCDP program included a training on the theme of governance at CORAF/WECARD. This training was held from November 26 to 27 2012 in Dakar, Senegal, and followed by coaching of the Board of Directors on November 29 to 30, 2012.

Main objective of the training was to strengthen the individual and collective skills of CORAF's administrators to effectively govern and lead the Board of Directors.

More specifically, the training was designed in order to

- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board regarding governance of the organization;
- clarify the different responsibilities at both the level of the Board and Management;
- allow participants to increase their knowledge and insights in roles and responsibilities of the Board;
- allow participants to increase the appropriate knowledge, skills and tools needed to manage and evaluate the Board of Directors.

b. Changes observed and progress made after 6-12 months

The training was evaluated +- 6 months later. Evaluation results reveal that participants believe they have gained effectively more knowledge about the topics tackled during the training, amongst the most cited were (i) **the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors**, (ii) the **factors contributing to a good functioning board** (atmosphere, quality of moderation, team work, etc). The knowledge gained has contributed significantly for board members to **feel more secure** while executing their roles and functions.

Participants being active during plenary and working group sessions during the training have improved considerably their **skills of how to moderate sessions**; some board members have become **more involved in discussions** and have **improved the relevance of their interventions**. Some board members are **more involved now in actions contributing to strengthen the institutional position of CORAF and develop alliances with different sectors while representing CORAF's board**.

The impact of the training on the overall functioning of the Board has been recognized at several levels. During preparation of meetings, major changes are the **involvement of other**

board members, besides that of the President, in the preparation of the agenda and improving the documentation which turns out to be more concise, better organized, more readable and understandable, highlighting the decisions and recommendations.

During meetings of the Board presiding officers have proven to **improved their moderation skills; presentations and lectures are shorter and have less redundancy, participants are more involved in discussions and interventions are more focused and synthetic bearing more on substance than form.**

The various **committees** (program, finance and audit, nomination and governance) **demonstrate greater strictness and accountability** in the handling of matters, by deepening questions before giving advice, taking decisions or formulating recommendations.

Between meetings, **communication** between the Board and management intensified and became more 'fluid'. All board members have e.g. interacted with the management and / or participated in activities that require their presence.

Members of the Board appreciated also the **evolution of the committee "Human Resources" into the committee "Nomination and Governance"** which is more in line with the mission of the Board. However, the specifications of this committee should be clarified further to guide members of the Board in identifying and addressing issues relevant for this committee.

Main challenges for the future relate to following topics:

Participants mentioned the **agenda is considered (still) too heavy** in relation to the time limit, the documents provided are too overcrowded and available only shortly before the session. This does not allow them to "digest" these documents sufficiently before the meeting. Administrators expressed their wish to receive most important documents sufficiently in time and to be more analytical than descriptive, highlighting the effects and impacts of interventions.

However, some **essential skills are still lacking in the committees**, related e.g. to the control of financial matters. Future appointments should therefore consider more complementarity of profiles.

Administrators would like the **STC scientific branch of the board to clarify better its role and guidance on the scientific dimension interventions of CORAF**. They recommend also a periodic assessment of STC.

To enable them to better perform their roles and functions and to strengthen the performance of the Board, the members expressed their **training needs**. Needs related to building skills of workshop moderation, and professional skills such as finance, audit and procurement skills, in order to give enable better reading of financial reports, to improve technical communication and advocacy, and to increase their knowledge of institutional documents and position.

Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) Reform Package

Though the BCDP program was not supposed to implement the 'Reform Package', we reviewed the extent to which CORAF staff believe recommendations on this package are taken into account by CORAF. The recommendations coming out the 2011 Assessment are as follows: *"The expertise gap within the STC is a risk to the quality assurance that is indeed the main goal of this committee. In order to maintain and further engage the experts presently on the STC, the assessment team recommends a commitment document that outlines expectations for membership on the Scientific and Technical Committee. The absence of some STC experts at board meetings or technical reviews was a particular problem or area of concern to CORAF."*

a. Changes observed and progress made after 6 – 12 months

CORAF staff were asked during the interview to give a score from 1-4 based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on the STC package have been brought into practice so far. The average score was **2.7**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at institutional level):

Positive changes

- A dynamic reform of the STC began in 2013:
 - o Stock taking of expertise needs of the STC has been taking place identifying available and lacking competencies,
 - o An operational program with clear objectives and activities, along with a budget have been developed,
 - o Sub-committees have been put in place,
 - o Staff feel that members are more engaged.

Remaining challenges

- The issue of governance at STC still remains;
- The role of the STC should be redefined otherwise the risk of STC working mainly at operational level will continue to exist;
- The issue of STC regarding remuneration remains unanswered.

Cooperation between CORAF and NARS

The assessment of 2011 revealed that CORAF's coordination mandate and project coordination towards the NARS should be maximized, and centralized implementation should be decreased. In an effort to strengthen the NARS while decentralizing Executive Secretariat functions, project coordinators within the NARS should be remunerated based upon deliverables. This will reinforce coordinator accountability and serve as an incentive for the project.

For the changes observed after 6 and 12 months: see part II of this report.

Effective administration

Based on the 2011 Assessment, it was recommended to streamline CORAF's organizational messaging and strategic documentation, to re-evaluate expected results, objectives, essential functions, and priority areas to determine redundancies and opt for a more simplified set of values.

a. Changes observed and progress made after 6 – 12 months

CORAF staff were asked during the interview to give a score from 1-4 based on the extent to which they believed that the 2011 recommendations on effective administration have been put into practice so far. The average score was **2.5**. Interviewees explained this score as follows (mainly changes at institutional level):

Positive changes

- Evaluation of the annual operational plan has been done together with support of consultants. The workplan has been 'cleaned up' and there is a more equal work division. Based on the results, strategic documents will be reviewed;
- This is an ongoing work including the review of manuals (public policy program, project review, etc), reviewing governance documents etc.

Remaining challenges

- A review committee has been set up but it is not very effective so far.
- An interviewee mentioned *"It is not easy to review strategic documents while the daily work needs also to be done"*.

PART II: Revolving internship and NARS visitors program

1. The revolving internship program

1.1. Introduction

In part I of this report, the contributions of the interns participating in the revolving internship program have been described for CORAF and CILSS, linking them explicitly the earlier recommendations of the 2011 Assessment by USAID. Therefore, to avoid repetition the immediate results of the interns' work will not be presented here.

This part of the report emphasizes the strengths and weaknesses of the revolving internship program, and provides an overview of the lessons learnt and recommendations for future internship programs. Point of departure is the opinion of nine interviewed interns who took part in the revolving internship program.

Furthermore the perception of the CILSS/CORAF staff on the extent to which they believe that the internship program has contributed to changes at the institutional or at the overall level are included in this part of the report. Some challenges and recommendations given by CILSS/CORAF staff (interviewees) in order to improve future internship programs are presented as well.

All the interviews took place in August 2013. An extended version of the report of the interviews can be found in Annex 4, as well as a list with the interviewed persons.

During the interviews with interns we questioned:

- The **process** of the internship program;
- **Satisfaction of the interns** regarding the content and process of the program;
- Extent to which they have **improved their competencies** in a specific domain
- Extent to which the internship program is **important for their future career possibilities**.

Four interns having worked at CORAF and five at CILSS were interviewed. Their internship lasted approximately 11 months. They were assigned to the following departments: IT/knowledge management, HRM, Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication/Public Relations. In advance most of the interviewees (6 out of 9) had not agreed upon learning objectives within the learning curriculum, but an orientation workshop was organised in Accra prior to the internship. At this moment 4 of the interviewed interns are employed.

1.2. Assessment of the process of the internship program

During the interviews, most interns indicated their satisfaction with the support of the internship coordinator and other staff, with the working and learning atmosphere. Aspects like clarity about responsibilities, facilities (electricity, computers), opportunities to learn and time for learning received lower scores (see table below).

| | Very satisfied | To some extent satisfied | Not so satisfied | Not at all satisfied |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1.Support from and guidance by your mentor/coordinator | 33.33%(3) | 55.56%(5) | 11.11%(1) | |
| 2.Help from other staff | 33.33%(3) | 44.45%(4) | | 22.22%(2) |
| 3.Clarity about your responsibilities | 22.22%(2) | 11.11%(1) | 33.34%(3) | 33.33%(3) |
| 4. Facilities of the organization (computer, use of a desk etc.) | 22.22%(2) | 22.22%(2) | 44.45%(4) | 11.11%(1) |
| 5. Working atmosphere (time pressure, open culture...) | 33.33%(3) | 44.45%(4) | 11.11%(1) | 11.11%(1) |
| 6.Opportunities given to learn and develop your competencies | 22.22%(2) | 11.11%(1) | 44.45%(4) | 22.22%(2) |
| 7. Time allowed for learning | 11.11%(1) | 22.22%(2) | | 66.67%(6) |
| 8. The extent to which you were allowed to make mistakes in your job | 44.45%(4) | 44.44%(4) | 11.11%(1) | |

Table 1: extent to which interns are satisfied with how the internship program has taken place (process aspects)

1.3. Extent to which interns have improved their competencies in a specific domain

When asked to what extent they perceived their skills to be improved (technical, social, communications, other), most of the interviewed interns indicated an improvement *to some extent* (see table below). Up to 30 percent found they have improved their skills to a large extent, and 20 to 30% of the interns indicated little or no improvement at all. Uncertainty on roles and responsibilities was a limiting factor; a lot of work was done *ad hoc* or at a moment when problems occurred. On the other hand this had a positive effect on their problem solving and social skills.

| | To a large extent improved | To some extent improved | To little extent improved | Not at all improved | N/A |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1.Technical knowledge and skills | 11.11%(1) | 55.55%(5) | 22.23%(2) | 11.11%(1) | |
| 2.Problem solving skills | 33.34%(3) | 55.55%(5) | | 11.11%(1) | |
| 3. Social skills (working with others, give feedback, teamwork...) | 22.22%(2) | 44.45%(4) | 11.11%(1) | 11.11%(1) | 11.11%(1) |
| 4.Communication skills | 33.34%(3) | 33.33%(3) | 22.22%(2) | | 11.11%(1) |
| 5.Specific attitudes | 22.22%(2) | 55.55%(5) | 11.11%(1) | | |
| 6. Other namely...(not specified) | | | | 11.11%(1) | |

Table 2: extent to which interns have improved their competencies in a specific domain

1.4. Extent to which the internship program is considered to be important for their future career

Almost 80 percent of the interviewees believed the internship program was in line and important for their future careers. Generally, the interns were of the view that having worked in an international organization exposed them to a number of issues: working with people from different backgrounds and cultures, relationship building and networking, proactiveness and autonomy in working and the experience gained are all important for their future careers.

1.5. Perception of the CORAF and CILSS staff about the contribution of the internship program to changes at institutional or at a more overall level

Changes at overall level as a result of the internship program as perceived by the interviewed CORAF staff:

- The program has inspired the development of IRECCS program (Initiative Reinforcement researcher capacity of national agricultural research systems (IRECCS), reflecting its relevance;
- Human resources have been strengthened in the context of workload;
- The interns have inspired CORAF staff by their dynamism, their youthfulness and their openness to modernity (ICT);
- The interns have contributed to the increased visibility and have built the capacity of the team on the use of social networks;
- The program has helped in accelerating the use of computerized tools and the development of databases;
- The internship program has raised awareness on the need to establish a database of staff and job descriptions and has supported the realisation of these needs;
- In general the four interns are considered *“to be pearls”* (as stated by the interviewees), *“they did move the house, they naturally understood the strengths and weaknesses of the house, and they got involved in working with humility. They had more than the status of trainees, they were more than beginners: “It was our staff”.*

The perception of the CILSS staff regarding changes at overall level:

- It can be concluded that they have accelerated the speed of work at CILSS and have really helped CILSS in advancing in specific areas like HR, IT and KM;
- The interns have shown a great desire to learn. The selection of the interns has been done well. The interns were well trained and demonstrated this through their actions and good attitudes: *“They were positive, competent people with good behaviour”;*
- The interns have boosted the communication and showing CILSS new ways that they can use to communicate better including the use of social networks, website, LinkedIn etc.,
- They have broken down barriers with staff members vis-à-vis social networks;
- The M&E database has been relaunched and a better linkage has been established between a digital database of CRAH and the monitoring and evaluation of the Executive Secretariat;
- Interns have promoted the modernity within CILSS and have contributed to a better external visibility of CILSS (sites, communications media).

1.6. Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

By CORAF/CILSS (captured during the interviews with CORAF/CILSS staff):

- Inform involved CILSS/CORAF staff in time of the arrival of interns (some interviewees mentioned that 2 weeks in advance is too short);
- Better prepare for the arrival of interns to ensure them the best possible working conditions: logistics, the work itself, etc.;
- (CILSS) The interns working on marketing, public relations and communications have amazed everyone. We have been paying an expensive consultant for less result. It is desirable that 'our intern' continues working for us.

By interns:

What interviewees perceived as positive was working in an international environment and opportunity to gain experience with major donor groups coupled with responsibilities.

Negative points mentioned were the communication protocol, staff attitude towards interns and logistics (little access to computers), and unclarity about their roles and responsibilities.

Based on their work at CORAF and CILSS, interviewed interns made the following recommendations and suggestions on how to improve the quality of the internship program in the future:

- Clarifying duties and responsibilities of interns under the program;
- Streamlining communication protocols between Africa Lead, ILC Africa and CORAF and CILSS vis-à-vis the interns;
- Orientation of the staff of CORAF and CILSS about the internship program to integrate the interns after a successful completion of the program as a sustainability measure;
- Provide better office space for the program;
- Changing their title from "intern" to for example "young professionals";
- Increase the stipend of interns to further motivate them.

Despite the challenges, the interns agreed that the internship program is essential and a good opportunity for young people to unearth their talents. If well managed and improved, it could generate transformational leaders and business people for the continent.

Opinion of the consultant/interviewer at the end of the interviewing exercise:

From the interviews conducted with the interns and from the aggregate point of view of interns, it is evident that the revolving internship program developed by Africa Lead, ILC Africa, CORAF and CILSS had a positive impact on the host organizations and interns' work ethics and attitudes and as such, filled the gaps identified by the institutional assessment conducted prior to this revolving internship program.

The interviewer recommends that roles and responsibilities, action plans and timelines be established prior to the posting of interns and the commencement of the program. The interviewer also recommends a sustainability plan to the implementers in terms of what happens to the interns once they finish the program (do they get retained by the host organization or do the host organizations help place them in permanent jobs).

The host organizations are also encouraged to arrange for proper office facilities and appropriate logistics for the internship program. Furthermore aligning the content of the internship program with the study objectives of interns will most likely contribute to achieving a greater impact.

2. The NARS visitors program

2.1. Introduction

The NARS Visitors Program is best described as a program that helps to link CORAF Secretariat to its NARS stakeholders through a month-long opportunity to learn CORAF policies and procedures. CORAF hosted three visiting NARS representatives for a one-month term six times across the year. NARS Visitors were from the following countries (Ghana, Chad, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Liberia, Mauritania, Gabon, CAR and Cameroon), making a total of 18 visitors. This NARS Visitors program supported representatives to spend one month at the CORAF Executive Secretariat (ES) to learn and have a first-hand experience of ES policies and procedures. As a cost saving activity, NARS Visitors resided in the revolving internship house and made use of existing structures set up for that program.¹⁸

General logistics and recruitment of NARS candidates were handled by ILC Africa and Africa Lead organized and funded their travel.

All NARS visitors were taken through an orientation session upon their arrival in Dakar. The interns who participated in the Revolving Internship program facilitated these sessions on program of activities and training that the NARS received during their one-month stay.

Out of the 18 persons participating in the NARS visitors program, 50% or 9 participants were interviewed. This part of the report gives an overview of how NARS visitors perceived:

- The process of the NARS visitors program
- The extent to which they have acquired professional knowledge, expertise and skills
- The extent to which they have found the program useful and applicable for themselves and their institution

Furthermore we asked the NARS visitors what were their main challenges and their suggestions on how to improve similar programs in the future.

We also include in this part of the report an overview of how CORAF staff perceive progress on cooperation with NARS and what they recommended during the interviews to strengthen similar programs in the future.

Learning objectives or expectations

All of the interviewees mentioned that there were no specific selection criteria for their participation in the NARS visitors program. They responded to the appeal of CORAF and followed the application procedures. Almost all interviewees (7 persons) mentioned they had learning objectives or expectations. These were mandated by their organizations. Capacity development was the overall topic in areas of management skills, report writing skills and financial management. Two persons mentioned that their expectation was to improve their knowledge about CORAF with the aim to enlarge their cooperation with CORAF. Two other persons regretted that they did not formulate specific learning objectives or expectations beforehand.

¹⁸ Report on the NARS Visitors Program, August 2013 (ILC).

2.2. Assessment of the process of the NARS visitors program

As the scoring results reveal (see Annex 5), most interviewees mentioned that they feel very satisfied about the process. All of the interviewees received information about the program prior to its start. The program was clear. Staff were helpful and ready to receive the visitors. It was clear what was expected of them during their visit. Four persons mentioned explicitly that they were supposed to acquire better knowledge about CORAF. The working conditions were very much appreciated. There were enough opportunities to learn on-site.

On the other hand, interviewees mentioned that the interns and CORAF staff supporting them were all quite busy during their visit. Therefore, there was not always sufficient time to offer the support and guidance that they would have liked. Many of the interviewees considered that there was not enough time for each of the topics in the program. Sometimes, the amount of time foreseen for a topic was not sufficient. Interviewees would have liked to have more time for presentations.

2.3. Assessment of increased knowledge/expertise, skills and usefulness of the program

In the opinion of the interviewees, it was not easy to apply the lessons learned during their visit. However, the concrete tools (example: templates for reporting) that were provided during their visit, were useful. Some mentioned that they need to make propositions to their superiors in order to be able to use all the information acquired.

For those who expressed that they had initial expectations, these have largely been met. One person mentioned that he learned things that were not in the program e.g. 'soft' skills: *being able to communicate with other persons working in the same field of expertise, but working in different countries*. They appreciated getting to know other colleagues with whom they could exchange.

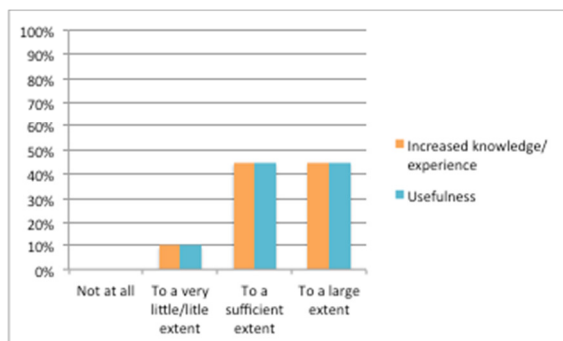
The main achievements of the interviewees during their visit relate to the strengthening of professional competencies and improvement of their social skills. For example: to get a better understanding of the importance to manage financial affairs, to elaborate projects and to exchange information and knowledge with colleagues from other countries.

| | Very satisfied | To some extent satisfied | Not so satisfied | Not at all satisfied | N/A |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------|
| Practical usefulness of what has been learnt during the visit | 33 % | 56 % | 11 % | | |
| Extent to which initial expectations have been met | 11 % | 78 % | | | 11 % |

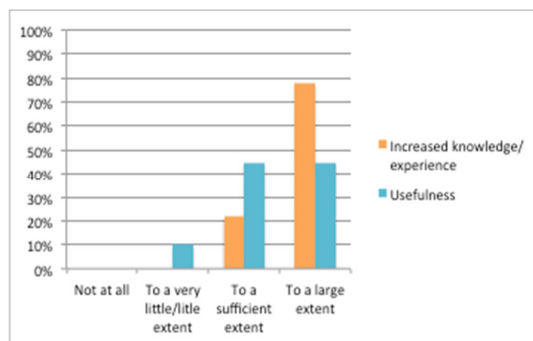
Table 3: practical usefulness of the NARS visitors program and extent to which expectations have been met by the NARS visitors

The graphics below illustrate to which extent the NARS visitors appreciated the topics offered to them during their visit. The yellow bars indicate to which extent each topic has contributed to increased **knowledge and expertise**. The blue bar gives an indication per topic to which extent it was found **useful for the own job**.

Introductory topics

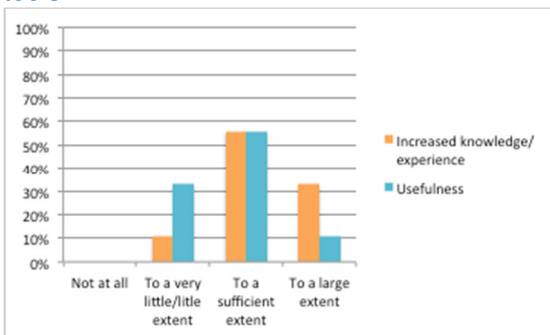


The international context of food security

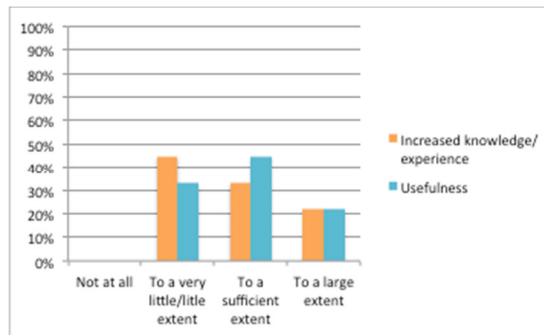


CORAF presentation

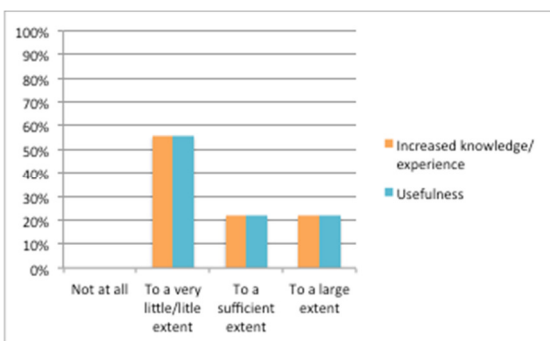
Finance, Administration and M&E. Learning how to work with CORAF using administrative tools



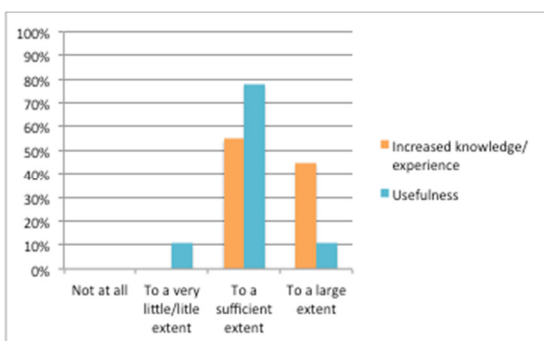
Introduction to the Finance and Human Resources Office



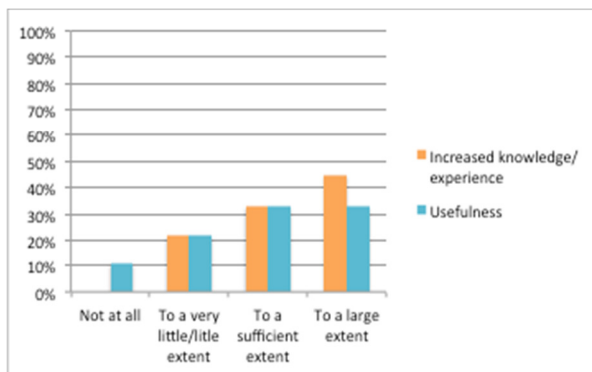
Identification of documents and key financial policies



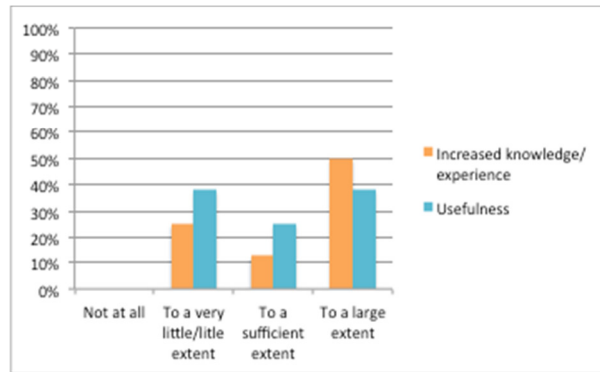
Financial management and financial reporting in practice



M&E - introduction

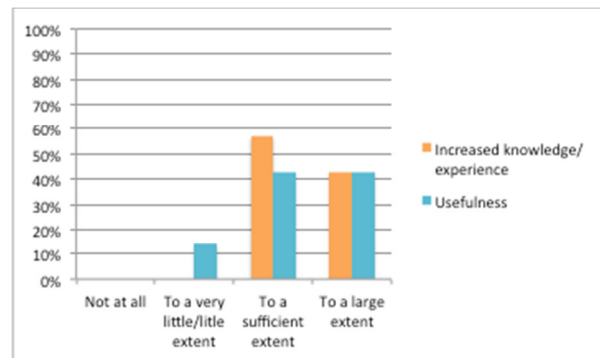
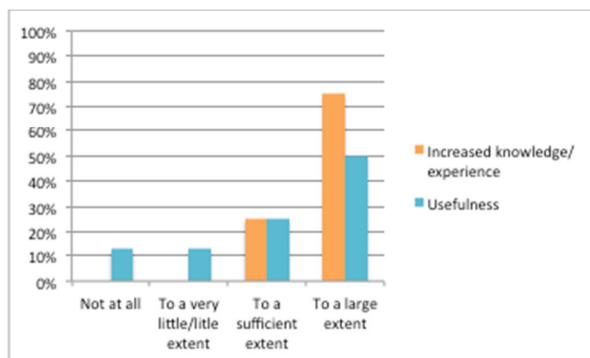


Examples of bad M&E reports on the technical aspects and Evaluation of projects



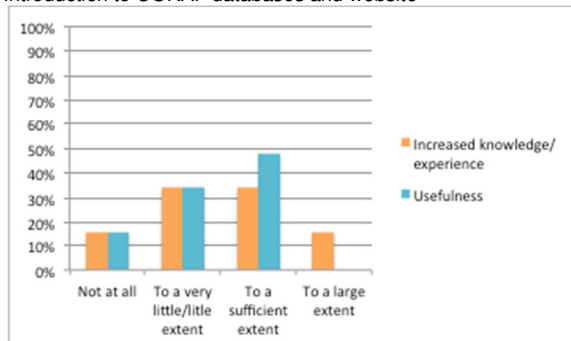
Practical M&E training

Information and Project Management

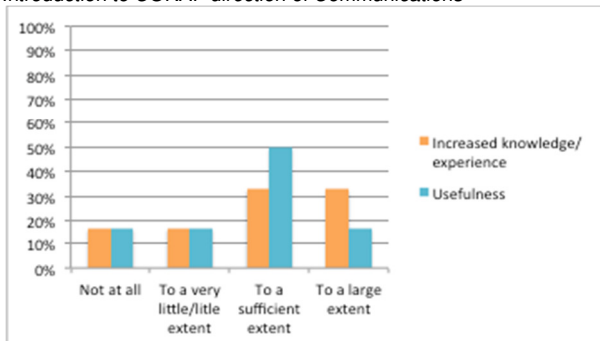


Introduction to CORAF databases and website

Introduction to CORAF direction of Communications



Drafting up a project



Developing and proposing a budget

Regarding the impact of the program on **skill development**, the interviewees mentioned the following (for a more extensive analysis, see report in Annex 5):

1. Problem solving skills

More than half of the interviewees (56%) acknowledged that their problem solving skills were to a large extent improved. The remaining 45 % considered their problem solving skills to some extent improved.

2. Social skills (working with others, giving feedback, teamwork)

Almost 80% of the interviewees acknowledged that their social skills were to a large extent improved.

3. Communication skills

More than half of the interviewees (56%) stated that their communication skills were to a large extent improved.

4. Specific attitudes

Less than half of the interviewees (45%) mentioned that they improved specific attitudes such as favouring team work, taking some distance when writing a report (in order to improve it), dealing with donors, and better professional competencies.

2.4. Application of the action plan, drafted at the end of the NARS visitors program

At the end of their stay, NARS visitors were asked to draft an action plan. During the interview we asked NARS visitors if they have implemented this action plan so far. Some of the interviewees remarked that CORAF needs to be more visible within their institutions. They tried to share the knowledge gained during their visit with colleagues (communication skills) and some organised meetings in order to do so. They tried to explain the importance of the procedures of CORAF and to look regularly for information on the website of CORAF. Two participants mentioned that they did not elaborate an action plan.

Some interviewees had planned to deliver project proposals to CORAF but were not able to do this so far. Another interviewee mentioned that he had planned a number of meetings to give a recap of the visit. This has not yet been done. One interviewee had encountered difficulties in her institution regarding raising awareness about some of the learnt topics. The reason for this - according to the interviewee - seems to be reluctance within her organization. Finally, there was one interviewee who cited that he had not yet organised the meetings he planned because of the lack of financial means.

The most important eye-openers were to experience the welcoming atmosphere at CORAF, the way CORAF works, to learn about project management at a high level (writing project proposals, know how to manage a budget, reporting back to CORAF).

2.5. Assessment of changes after 6-12 months of the NARS visitor program and progress made so far, perceived by CORAF staff

The 2011 assessment revealed that CORAF's coordination mandate and project coordination towards the NARS should be maximized, and centralized implementation decreased. In an effort to strengthen the NARS while decentralizing Executive Secretariat functions, project coordinators within the NARS should be remunerated based upon deliverables. This will reinforce coordinator accountability and serve as an incentive for project.

Positive changes mentioned by the NARS visitors during the interview:

- The NARS visitors and IRCCS program are likely to improve collaboration between the Executive Secretariat of CORAF and NARS;
- Project coordinators within the NARS have more responsibilities in the implementation of projects and project management costs awarded to NARS have been increased;
- The role of project coordinators was clarified during a workshop;

-
- The NARS feel forgotten by donors who all turn to CORAF, but the principle of *subsidiarity* is indeed applied. CORAF does not perform actions in the country which should/could be done by the NARS institutions but coordinates across several countries;
 - CORAF has proposed that PRASAC (Regional Centre of Applied Research in Central Africa) could coordinate projects in Central Africa;
 - Quality certification of the national centres and specialization support of these centres is going on.

2.6. Main challenges for the future and recommendations

Based on the interviews, main challenges and suggestions to further improve cooperation between CORAF and the NARS organizations can be summarized as follows:

Main challenges

- There are still significant weaknesses at the level of the NARS regarding the implementation of projects and financial project management so that the Executive Secretariat must take over financial management of certain activities;
- Low level of staff motivation in the NARS in the implementation of projects, which discourages accountability, people who work on the projects do not always receive additional compensation to keep them motivated.

Recommendations

By NARS visitors:

Suggestions to CORAF:

Remaining challenges for the future lie in the strengthening of cooperation with NARS members. According to the interviewees, this is a matter of reinforcing relations with policy makers within their organizations.

There should be more sensitization on working with CORAF (especially on procedures because this is not fully known to all NARS members. One interviewee mentioned that CORAF should be clearer about their expectations when it comes to financial procedures. The same interviewee mentioned that CORAF should do more to assist or support people in project management.

Suggestions to the NARS institutions:

Some of the interviewees mentioned there should be a more pro-active attitude, i.e. not to wait for CORAF to bring forward a project, and to look out for opportunities themselves. Others mentioned that the communication channels should be improved within their organizations to share and spread information about CORAF. The website of CORAF should be consulted much more. Furthermore, the quality of the project proposals could be improved as well and researchers should have an active role in responding to project proposals from CORAF.

General challenges and recommendations:

Two interviewees cited that it was sometimes embarrassing that they couldn't speak *French* because almost all persons were bi-lingual in French and English.

Most interviewees didn't like the way in which the *logistics* were organised. One suggestion is to arrange a private bus that can be used by the NARS visitors to move from one place to another.

The interviewees gave the following suggestions to *improve the quality of a future NARS visitors program*: follow the initial program as much as possible, plan the program according to the availability of the responsible staff persons at CORAF, put at the visitor's disposal a bus for transport, arrange more time for topics and give them more content, and finally give a follow-up to the trainings.

Another recommendation is to *improve the time-management* of the program. The score for satisfaction on time allocated to each topic foreseen in the program was 22%.

By CORAF staff:

In general the objectives of the NARS visitors program are considered to be relevant, but there are still many weaknesses in the design and coordination of the program e.g. the selection procedure for the visitors is not known, logistics were poor, time was too short to ensure real changes afterwards, visitors were not part of the CORAF team during their stay *"we did not really feel their presence"*. At the same time CORAF staff moved a lot and did not really get a chance to get to know the visitors better.

2.7. Conclusions

Overall, the results of the review of the NARS visitor program show that participants ***improved their knowledge about the functioning of CORAF and on the topics that were presented.***

Most of the comments given were related to ***improvement of their professional competencies*** and the need to further improve their ***communication skills***. The welcoming atmosphere and open working culture at CORAF were very much appreciated and this made them understand how important this is in their own organizations. They liked the human relationships and interpersonal interactions among staff members.

However, participants were not (all) in the position to assure that the lessons learned would be implemented in their organizations. Therefore, a recommendation is to ***assess participants' abilities and position*** beforehand, to ***maintain relations*** with persons within their organizations who are in the position to share the knowledge they acquired and to give ***follow-up support*** after the program to do this.

PART III: Conclusions and recommendations

1. Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations – by CILSS

The interviews with CILSS staff revealed following **conclusions and lessons learnt regarding** the BCDP program:

TRAINING

- The number of participants affected by the program is not high enough to induce real changes across teams;
- Training has been beneficial to individual and aggregate levels since CILSS has no training plan or policy on training and at the same time the training is a motivational factor;
- Most trainers mastered their field of training and have demonstrated good teaching skills;
- The level of certain training was sometimes not sufficient and adapted to the level of knowledge and skills of participants e.g. KM and M&E training especially when it comes to specialized technical topics.
- Some people were enrolled in all courses while others did not have access to their preferred course;
- The short-term planning of training has resulted in many problems such as delays, conflicts of agenda that have not allowed employees to participate in training for which they were registered;
- The program could have been more relevant with trainings responding more specifically to capacity building needs within CILSS, and less focused on *ad hoc* interventions.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

- The program for junior executives is well thought and may well boost CILSS.

Remaining challenges and needs, expressed by the CILSS interviewees, can be summarized as follows:

| Remaining challenges at personnel level | Remaining challenges at the institutional level |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- More strengthening of skills on the analysis of and feedback on financial reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A high staff turnover is a real risk for CILSS, it becomes really urgent to recruit a professional HR Manager and to implement a more efficient and effective HR management system including adopting new HRM tools, policy motivation, institutionalization of the internship program etc) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Training on policy evaluation is needed besides training on the evaluation of projects and programs. Staff need to bring into practice both complex policies and programs that require the use of other approaches and assessment tools | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A better use of human resources is needed including the strengthening of collaboration and the implementation of a staff mobility system: ES, AGRHYMET and INSAH |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A better understanding of the methods for evaluating complex projects and programs is needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CILSS should confirm its international stature by taking good care of its image, by anticipating more and, by showing a more pro-active attitude and professionalism. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Strengthening of skills on career management because this aspect is not sufficiently taken | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- There is a need to invest in career management |

| | |
|---|--|
| into account at CILLS | |
| - More capacity building is needed to improve the governance of programs. | |

Main **recommendations** given by CILSS staff during the interviews were the following:

TRAINING:

- More coaching and guidance of participants is needed to ensure implementation of acquired skills and knowledge;
- CILSS should promote and support the training program and give it the institutional importance it deserves by getting involved in the establishment of information mechanisms, collection of training needs, organizing registration, monitoring of learning results and application of achievements by the participants;
- Africa Lead should help CILLS to mobilize resources for the operationalization of some learning outcomes and recommendations of trainers e.g. equipment to ensure the prevention of serious computer problems;
- Training should be adapted more to different situations of CILSS to make it more practical for participants;
- Participants should be asked to draft a brief report on how they have applied the acquired training results three months after the training course. This report could be a condition for future access to training;
- Assign within the institution someone as 'watchdog' and 'encouragement' function, who will be responsible to develop an overall dynamics amongst participants to ensure the implementation of the acquired training, to monitor this implementation, to exchange learning results etc. However it needs to be emphasized that the application of learning outcomes is the individual responsibility of the staff;
- Training efforts could have more impact if these would be more extensive (longer) and touched more people within different staff categories;
- The program should be continued;
- Themes should be extended in order to reach more categories of staff;
- Spread the training more over time to allow participants to practice more gradually and in-depth;
- Transparent mechanisms deserve to be put in place to ensure equitable access to information about the trainings;
- It is necessary to make a longer-term planning of training e.g. on an annual basis, to allow agents to incorporate time in their calendar and to allow to find qualified and experienced trainers;
- It is needed to strengthen the training needs identification by interacting more directly with staff *"Before training us, ask us what we need"*.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:

- Unit/departmental leaders should be more involved in identifying the interns' needs, the definition of appropriate profiles and the development of intern plans;
- The trainees were very competent, but the qualification "Junior" could inhibit the expression of their full potential;
- Expand the internship areas in order to include and reach all departments;
- Communicate more on the contribution of interns by asking heads of departments to develop an accountability report on the interns' contributions: 'what did they deliver and contribute to each department?'

2. Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations – by CORAF

The interviews with CORAF staff revealed the following **lessons learnt regarding** the BCDP program:

IN GENERAL

- Supporting such a program is relevant for CORAF to discuss and undertake measurements to improve systems;
- Despite the fact that people are graduates, capacity building is essential for them to be able to face their challenges, and to achieve the corporate objectives;
- Africa Lead is relevant but there is a lack of transparency in its governance and funding, there is no information on the costs, procedures for recruitment firms.

TRAINING

- Planning of the training was not well done; people participated sometimes because they were available and not because they had a need. This is a waste of resources and demotivating for trainers;
- At the end of the program people just wanted to finish it, the quality was no longer a requirement and it was difficult to mobilize staff for training;
- As a whole the training was very interesting but regrettable that there was no staff involvement regarding the choice of topics for training and designation of participants by officials to the training;
- It 's sometimes difficult to take part in training while having other commitments;
- More simultaneous translation should be foreseen when combining English/French training;
- Apply more techniques adapted to adult education because some modules were quite boring.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

- The internship program has come at the right time. CORAF was overwhelmed and this program has helped to bridge the shortage of staff and boost the institution.

NARS

- The NARS visitor program was too short to come to sustainable results;
- We should improve the conditions of hosting NARS visitors;
- The impact of the NARS visitor program is not really visible.

Remaining challenges and needs, expressed by the CORAF interviewees, can be summarized as follows:

| Remaining challenges at personnel level | Remaining challenges at the institutional level |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management of social networks as a means of improving the visibility of the institution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and improvement of scientific writing - Linking science and development; IR4D remains a major challenge for CORAF |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oriented Agricultural Research Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Justify its raison d'être, its impact by putting effective mechanisms for knowledge management and communication of knowledge and the results produced |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen skills to become more effective in HRM practical experience. Theoretical knowledge is not sufficient, coaching needs to be foreseen as well - Acquire new HRM tools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successful financial management in relation to the importance and the growing diversity of funding and management procedures |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of environmental issues needs to be taken into account in the implementation of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For program managers to see the importance of compliance with the operational |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| projects | management procedures (program managers) and to strengthen the capacity of the financial services project + to improve collaboration and synergy between both |
| - Strengthen leadership skills | - Improve the management: all managers come from research centers and are struggling with appropriate management principles |
| | - Need for effective planning system (given the number of projects). This requires appropriate planning software incorporating the issue of risk management in the implementation of projects |
| | - Reporting in a results-oriented way remains a challenge. Management should include this when strengthening the capacity of NARS |

Main **recommendations** given by the CORAF staff during the interviews were the following:

IN GENERAL:

- We should think of merging the internship, NARS and IRCC program so that all departments can be involved, to better cover the needs and to come to more coherence while implementing different program components;
- More transparency by improving internal communication on the Africa Lead program would contribute to increased recognition and support by CORAF.¹⁹

TRAINING:

- Coaching and mentoring in the workplace after the training is recommended because the theoretical knowledge is not enough to implement the learning outcomes and to become more efficient and effective;
- Follow up of staff trained by their managers could contribute to better integration of results e.g. having some meetings after the training to discuss remaining challenges of the departments, how to value the acquired training results to meet these challenges, how to ensure the monitoring of progress made etc.;
- We should empower people trained and enable them to apply the acquired training while guiding them through coaching;
- Training should focus more on specific needs of the participants in order to increase achievements afterwards;
- Need to place the training program in a more comprehensive and strategic framework in the future with a pilot including steps like the identification of training needs at the Executive Secretariat and NARS level, implementation of the training, capitalization of the training results;
- The leadership training should be extended to all relevant staff because everyone at this level must demonstrate leadership qualities to fully carry out its functions;
- Continue the short courses , reaching people who have not been able to benefit;
- Training material could be better; it is not always clear how to use the material.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

- We should provide support to help interns to find a job after they have finished their internship;
- The interns' program has been very useful, and it should be expanded so that more departments can benefit.

NARS

- Identify real life problems related to the training topics before training is given, for example regarding NARS: the most critical concerns were related to the justification of

¹⁹ Note MDF: This is a surprising recommendation since some actions were undertaken in advance to increase participation and ownership of the program with staff (a presentation of plan to staff; prioritization of their needs; a survey online to identify capacity needs). Nevertheless since the recommendation was mentioned several times we did not want to leave it out.

spending/expenditure etc. Training can target these points more effectively beforehand.

3. Overall conclusions and recommendations – by MDF

Based on all the information gathered during the assessment and documentation of the progress made and current status of the USAID/West Africa funded BCDP program, following conclusions and recommendations were compiled by the MDF team of consultants:

a. Training/Coaching

CILSS

Communication and knowledge management

CILSS has taken major steps to improve its internal and external communication and CILSS staff recognize this. Through the internship program, interns have contributed to these improvements to a great extent.

Efforts have been made to develop a strategic communication plan. Based on the interviews there appear to be mixed opinions on the existence and quality of this plan. Other funding priorities seem to be a limiting factor to take further steps.

It is recommended to ensure that the strategic **communication plan** is well communicated within the organization and with relevant stakeholders. This plan should also regularly be revised and updated. If a communication officer is considered to be necessary to implement and follow up the plan, then efforts need to be made to allocate funds and to recruit a communication officer, specifically for external and strategic communication issues. Internal communication is a responsibility of all staff and needs to be maintained and further improved. A follow-up training that builds further upon the first training could support this.

Through the internship program and other initiatives efforts have been made to modernize the CILSS introducing new IT tools and technologies. This could be further strengthened by CILSS staff, through future interns and eventually a more specific training on **knowledge management** and capitalization and exchange of knowledge through e.g. e-learning platforms.

HRM

HRM is the domain where less progress has been made compared to the other organizational aspects. Nevertheless immediately after the training an HR action plan was developed by the participants. The interviews have made clear though that most important action points were not put in place. Recruitment of an HR officer, a revision of the salary scales, a development of a training policy and proper career management have not been brought into practice, which has had and still has a negative effect on staff turnover. It is not clear why the HR position has not been filled in so far, but this seems quite critical in order to move forward.

Future emphasis should be placed on the recruitment of an HR officer and to the development of most critical HR policies like e.g. a salary policy, career development and training.

Resource Mobilization

The trainings on budgeting and writing proposals have provided a good basis to strengthen competencies in the field of fund mobilization.

It is recommended to organize a more specialized and strategic course for staff involved in fund mobilization specifically in building private-public partnerships and other specialized topics related to fund mobilization and cost recovery strategies.

At the same time a more in-depth and specialized training could sharpen further the skills of financial staff on budget management of more complex programs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Important efforts have been made to improve the M&E competency level of staff by means of an M&E, Evaluation and RBM training. M&E tools and databases have been developed and put into practice. Major steps seem to have been taken in the direction of implementing the recommendations of the 2011 USAID recommendations.

In general CILSS has enhanced its level of thinking and working towards a more result-oriented organizational attitude and culture instead of developing and executing activity-based interventions. This has led to a higher quality of programs and projects which are more coherent and with a focus on more result-oriented monitoring and evaluation. The combined training of RBM with leadership skills has resulted in a more global/team-oriented attitude on accountability.

For the future responding to the need for coaching or training on how to use monitoring and evaluation for evaluating policies besides project/program evaluation should be continued. Future training could also be organized around more technical and specialized M&E tools, since there is an M&E basis now that can be strengthened further (assuming that staff turnover does not impact negatively the existing competency level). It is also important to give sufficient attention to strengthen the capacities of the M&E team and to watch over good task division and complementarities.

CORAF

Communication/knowledge management

Considerable progress has been made in the field of communication and knowledge management. The interns have played a major role in supporting the development of practical tools and instruments on communication and KM. The more strategic KM framework is still missing but an action plan has been developed by C2D.

It is important to continue the efforts and to consolidate the results so far on communication and KM. It is recommended to give priority to the development of a KM strategy so that KM activities and instruments can be institutionalized and better embedded.

HRM

Training results have been translated into a HR plan that has been executed during the past 12 months. This has had a positive effect on the functioning of CORAF. The assignment of an intern to the HR department has further strengthened and consolidated these impacts. Although the HR position was not institutionalized at a strategic level, efforts have been made to fill in the specific HR role resulting in progress made on operational HR issues i.e. improvement of existing tools and development of some new instruments for e.g. an HR information system.

Furthermore it seems that the HR training has also resulted in a more open working environment where feedback is more easily given and received. It is recommended to create more clarity on the HRM strategy as a whole since this remains unclear, as well as clarity on the salary scale.

Resource mobilization

The trainings on both budgeting and writing proposals have provided a good basis to strengthen competencies in the field of resource mobilization. CORAF has made considerable progress in establishing mechanisms like the WAPP in order to strengthen their own financial basis.

It is recommended to organize a more specialized and strategic course for staff specifically involved in resource mobilization and cost recovery strategies, improving further the basic competencies acquired/strengthened through the trainings on budgeting and writing proposals. At the same time a more in-depth and specialized training could sharpen further the skills of financial staff on budget management of more complex programs.

Monitoring and Evaluation including RBM

Several trainings and the contributions of an intern have resulted in significant progress made in the field of monitoring and evaluation and RBM. A more result-oriented way of thinking and working has led to more effective Terms of Reference for projects, better reports and a higher quality of indicators.

An M&E team is operational but needs further capacity strengthening. There is a basis for M&E now and this basis needs further institutionalization i.e. efforts are still needed to overcome resistance on M&E and to create a mind shift that M&E contributes to more effective and higher quality of programs instead of considering M&E as a watchdog function.

Governance of the Board

Evaluation results of the training on board governance reveal that knowledge has been increased about the topics (i) the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors, (ii) the factors contributing to a good functioning board (atmosphere, quality of moderation, team work, etc). The knowledge gained has contributed significantly for board members to feel more secure while executing their roles and functions. Quality of sessions and interaction between the board and management have improved considerably. At the other hand, technical and professional skills of board members can further be improved as well as the functioning of the STCommittee and the way how the agenda is being managed.

The training program/coaching as a whole

In general the training program has been well received by CORAF and CILSS and has significantly contributed to increased knowledge and skills in a number of domains.

Recommendations to improve future training programs can be summarized as follows:

- Ensure that identification of training needs, selection of staff, selection of trainers and organization of the trainings are done following clear and most of all transparent procedures, known and recognized by staff;
- Ensure that trainings are sufficiently related to the working environment of participants and organized in such a way that participants can immediately start to implement their acquired knowledge and skills;
- Give follow-up to a training afterwards;

-
- Coaching as it has been organized now seems not always to have worked very well at individual or personnel level or at least it has not been related sufficiently to the training program as such and to individual or group coaching of the participants afterwards. The concept and purpose of coaching should therefore be better clarified, as well as the linkage (or not) with the training program;
 - Training courses have often been considered as too short; instead of a 2 or 3 day training most participants would have preferred a 5 day training (as mentioned during interviews);
 - Targeting the right people for the training should be done more accurately in the future;
 - Specifically when more specialized trainings would be offered, it is not recommended to allow participants with a different knowledge and skills level;
 - A future training program of this size should preferably be spread over a longer time period. There seemed to be some training-tiredness at the end of the program, since a lot of trainings were organized within a rather short period of time;
 - The training program should become part of the institutional learning curriculum;
 - Furthermore, it is suggested to give training – both individual and collective – more institutional attention by linking it to career and professional development. It is important to foresee budget for professionalization of staff, also when staff are recruited on a temporary basis. In reality they work often 4 or more years for the organization, which is sufficiently long to invest in their development to ensure results and at the same time to get motivated staff;
 - Besides offering more in-depth and specialized training, some of the most successful trainings could be offered again to extend them to all relevant staff;
 - In order to ensure optimal results, a training could also be foreseen in two parts: a first training where ‘homework’ by means of an action plan or project at short notice is developed, then a period where participants practice and apply their action plan in their own working environment, followed by a follow up workshop and training to reflect upon results and to plan for the future, eventually combined with training on some additional topics.

b. The revolving internship program

Most of the interns we interviewed expressed their satisfaction on how they have been received at CORAF and CILSS. Support from and guidance by their coordinators, as well as help from other staff and the working atmosphere were particularly appreciated. Besides technical skills, problem solving, social and communication skills were sharpened by the interns while working at CORAF/CILSS.

Almost 80 percent of the interviewed interns believe that the internship program is important for their future careers.

When asking CORAF and CILSS staff, unanimity existed on the fact that the revolving internship program has contributed significantly to the functioning of both organizations in the fields of HRM, IT, knowledge management, communication/public relations and monitoring and evaluation. Interns have brought modernity and new techniques into CORAF and CILSS.

It is recommended to continue the internship program. Specific attention should be paid in the future to:

- Improvement of the logistical support and working conditions e.g. access to internet, computers, better office space;

-
- Clarify from the start their roles, tasks and responsibilities and about the objectives to which they are supposed to contribute (in line with more result-oriented thinking and accountability for results);
 - Streamline communication between Africa Lead, ILC Africa and CORAF/CILSS vis-à-vis the interns;
 - Change the title from 'junior' or 'intern' into for example 'young professional' since interns have demonstrated that they are highly skilled and motivated people who deserve to be seen as professional temporary staff;
 - Extension of the program to other departments e.g. staff working on resource mobilization, administration;
 - Reflection upon a better coaching and guidance of interns after they have finished their work at CORAF and CILSS in order to support them in their search for a job.

c. The NARS visitors program

The NARS visitor program is a program aimed at helping the establishment of a better link between the CORAF secretariat and its NARS stakeholders through a month-long opportunity to learn and exchange on CORAF policies and procedures.

Based on the interviews with the NARS visitors we can conclude that they have appreciated this exchange program. More than 80% found the program practically useful and almost 80% mentioned that their initial expectations have been met.

At the end of the program, NARS visitors drafted an action plan aimed at improving cooperation between their institution and CORAF. In general several visitors encountered problems while trying to implement this action plan because of different reasons e.g. lack of time, reluctance, lack of financial means etc.

Recommendations to improve the quality of future similar programs are:

- Foresee a follow-up to this program and guidance of NARS visitors of at least 3-6 months after the program,
- Improve the program content,
- Plan sufficient time for each topic and eventually increase the program's overall time period,
- Ensure exchange moments with all relevant CORAF staff,
- Ensure that NARS staff participating in the program have the required abilities and mandate in order to be in the position afterwards to improve NARS-CORAF cooperation.

Interviews with CORAF staff have shown that the NARS institutions are likely to improve their collaboration with the Executive Secretariat and that project coordinators within the NARS have increasing responsibilities in the implementation of projects. This responds to the recommendation of the 2011 Assessment of USAID that CORAF's coordination mandate and project coordination towards the NARS should be maximized, centralized implementation decreased.

Annex 1 – Overview of documents consulted

- Africa Lead/BCDP Review Terms of Reference, by Africa Lead/USAID, 30 July 2013.
- BCDP progress reports (30 April, 31 May, 30 June, 31 July, 27 August, 28 September 2012)
- Summary of the BCDP program, 10 June 2013 (ppt).
- West Africa Institutional Assessment Report –CILSS, by USAID and prepared by MSI, May 2011.
- West Africa Institutional Assessment Report –CORAF, by USAID and prepared by MSI, June 2011.
- CORAF and CILSS Revolving Internship Program Status Update Report, by ILC, 28 May 2013.
- CILSS - Etats des lieux et Plan de Renforcement des capacités. Bases de données et Gestion des connaissances, par C2D Services, 6 juin 2013.
- CORAF - Etats des lieux et Plan de Renforcement des capacités. Bases de données et Gestion des connaissances, par C2D Services, 13 juin 2013.
- Individual participants' reports on results of the NARS visitors program, 2013.
- Evaluation report- Rapport évaluation formation "Board Gouvernance" CORAF/WECARD – June 2013.
- Training reports:
 - o CILSS Rapport de Formation en « Budgétisation », Oct.2012.
 - o CILSS Rapport de Formation « Evaluation des Projets et Programmes », Dec.2012.
 - o CILSS Training Report "Result Based Management 1", June 2012.
 - o CILSS Rapport de Formation « Rédaction des Propositions de Projet », Nov.2012.
 - o CILSS Rapport de Formation « Gestion des Ressources Humaines », Sept.2012.
 - o CILSS Rapport de Formation « Advanced Leadership », June 2012.
 - o CILSS workshop report "Technical Writing and Editing Skills", Dec. 2012.
 - o CILSS Rapport de Formation "Communication et Relations Publiques", Aug.2012.
 - o CORAF Rapport de formation « Gestion des Ressources Humaines », Aug.2012.
 - o CORAF Training report « Monitoring and Evaluation », Sept.2012.
 - o CORAF Rapport de Formation « Rédaction des Propositions de Projet », Dec.2012.
 - o CORAF Training Report: combined RBM and Leadership Training, July 2012.
 - o CORAF Training Report "Result Based Management 1" May 2012.
 - o CORAF Training Report "Result Based Management 1", July 2012.
 - o CORAF Training Report "Execution Based Leadership", July 2012.
 - o CORAF Training Report "Monitoring and Evaluation", Sept.2012.
 - o CORAF, Workshop Report for the Scientific Writing and Editing Training Course for CORAF, Dec.12

Annex 2: Facts and figures – interviews with CORAF staff

List of staff interviewed at CORAF

| Nom | Fonction | Date d'occupation de la fonction | Nombre d'années dans l'institution |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| FEMMES : 5 | | | |
| Ndeye Khady Lo | Assistante en communication | 1 ^{er} sept 2011 | Entre 1- 3 années: |
| Awa Cissé | Contrôleur financier | 1 ^{er} juin 2012 | > 5 années (2007) |
| Ngning Sophie Yandé | Assistante en ressource humaines | 1 ^{er} août 2012 | > 5 années (2006) |
| Ndèye Oulèye Anne | Assistante en base de données | 1 ^{er} juillet 2011 | Entre 1- 3 années: |
| M Jean-Rostand Jiadiais KAMGA | Directeur administratif et financier | 1 ^{er} décembre 2004 | > 5 années |
| HOMMES : 5 | | | |
| Dr Harold Roy-MACAULEY | Directeur exécutif | 1 ^{er} juillet 2012 | > 5 années |
| Julienne KUISEU | Assistante de program GRN, renforcement des capacités, gestion des connaissances | 12 juin 2006 | > 5 années |
| Jerome Konan Kouamé | Assistant de program (cultures vivrières, élevage pêche aquaculture, biotechnologie et biosécurité) | 15 fév. 2010 | Entre 3-5 années: |
| Aboubakar Njoya | Directeur des programs | 02 juillet 2012 | Entre 1- 3 années: |
| George Achou Mulu | chargé de la planification | 08 janv. 2007 | > 5 années |

| Name training: | | <i>Number of interviewed staff having participated in one or more of the trainings mentioned in this table:</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Results Based Management | 8 |
| 2. | Advanced Leadership | 7 |
| 3. | Human Resource Management | 7 |
| 4. | Monitoring and Evaluation Systems | 3 |
| 5. | Board Governance | 2 |
| 6. | Scientific Writing and Editing | 2 |
| 7. | Report Writing | 0 |

Participation of CORAF staff in Africa Lead trainings

Annex 3: Facts and figures – interviews with CILSS staff

List of interviewed staff at CILSS

| Nom | Fonction | Date d'occupation de la fonction | Nombre d'années au CILSS |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| FEMMES : | | | |
| Yoni Aminata | Chargée de la paie et de la logistique | Mai 2006 | > 5 années |
| Safiatou Ouedraogo née Sanou | Assistante de direction | 19 juillet 2009 | Entre 1 et 5 années |
| Sanou Segue Sabine | Assistante SE | 2011 Appui à la GRH depuis 2009 | > 5 années |
| HOMMES : | | | |
| Alex Ouedraogo | Gestionnaire finances | 17 octobre 2011 | Entre 1 et 3 années |
| Ibrahim IDI-ISSA | Chef unité d'appui management et suivi-évaluation | 1 ^{er} août 2010 | > 5 années |
| Dr Mahalmoudou Hamadoun | Coordinateur régional food security : désertification contrôle, population et développement | Octobre 2011 | > 5 années |
| Robert | informaticien, administrateur système et réseaux | 1 ^{er} janvier 2009 | Entre 1 et 5 années |
| Sanou Souleymane | Directeur administratif et financier + intérim GRH | 15 octobre 2007 | > 5 années |
| Dan Koulou | Expert communication multimédia | 03 Janvier 2008 | >5 années |
| Tiendrebeogo Hamidou | Expert chargé de SE | 04 Novembre 2011 | > 5 années |
| Barmou Idrissa | Chargé du Renforcement du système d'information, | Juillet 2003 | > 5 années |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | documentation et communication /PREDAS (program régional pour la promotion des énergies domestiques et alternatives au sahel (EX) | | |
|--|---|--|--|

| Name training: | | <i>Number of interviewed staff having participated in one or more of the trainings mentioned in this table:</i> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Advanced Leadership | 3 |
| 2. | Result Based Management | 4 |
| 3. | Monitoring and Evaluation Systems | 2 |
| 4. | Human Resource Management | 4 |
| 5. | Communication Training | 4 |
| 6. | Budget Development and Management | 2 |
| 7. | Proposal Writing | 4 |
| 8. | Evaluating Projects | 3 |
| 9. | Report Writing | 2 |
| 10. | Advanced Leadership and Communication | 1 |
| 11. | Knowledge management | 3 |

Participation of CILSS staff in Africa Lead trainings

Annex 4: extended report - interviews with interns CORAF/CILSS

This annex presents the views of nine (9) interns who took part in the revolving internship program recommended by the institutional assessment conducted earlier to bring expertise to the functioning of CORAF and CILSS.

Approach to interviews

In all there were ten (10) interns assigned to both institutions. Interviews were conducted via skype and phone following stipulated time slots and schedules agreed upon with the interviewees in advance. In the instances where interviewees were unable to connect and have the interview via skype or phone, it was agreed that the questionnaire be sent to their email and after completion, they send it back to MDF's consultant. In the end, we interviewed eight (8) interns via skype while one person emailed the filled questionnaire and another one did not respond at all (skype, phone and email).

Interview instruments

A set of questionnaire made up of both open and closed ended questions was designed to gauge the impact of the internship program. They were in English and French versions given the mix of individuals i.e. English and French backgrounds. The instrument covered various areas including general information to the core issues of program assessment with sub-questions in between.

Name, organizations and time slots

| Name/Nom | date proposed/date proposée/ | Hour proposed/horaire proposé (GHANA time) | which means for the interviewees/ ce qui signifie pour les interviewé(e)s: | Organization |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Rivaldo KPADONOU ²⁰ | 26-Aug | 09:00 | 10:00 Cameroon | CILSS |
| Kelly ADEDIHA | 26-Aug | 12:30 | 10:30 Togo | CILSS |
| Pauline PETRYSZYN | 26-Aug | 12:00 | 14:00 France | CILSS |
| Sandrine Ouattara | 26-Aug | 13:30 | 13:30 B.Faso | CILSS |
| Jorel Boulinzann | 26-Aug | 15:00 | 16:00 Congo | CILSS |
| Kader SANFO | 26-Aug | 16:30 | 16:30 B.Faso | CILSS |
| Patrice LEUMENI | 27-Aug | 09:00 | 10:00 Cameroon | CORAF/WECARD |
| Philippe ROMERO | 27-Aug | 10:30 | 12:30 France | CORAF/WECARD |
| Hervé ZOK | 27-Aug | 12:00 | 13:00 Cameroon | CORAF/WECARD |
| Idrissa Bourgou | 27-Aug | 13:30 | 13:30 B.Faso | CORAF/WECARD |

²⁰ Has not responded to our call and as such, the analysis is based on 9 responses

Presentation of main findings

Chapter 1: General information

| | |
|--|---|
| No. of interns related to CORAF | 4 |
| No. of interns related to CILLS | 5 |
| No. of interns assigned to: | |
| • General administration/secretariat | Nil |
| • Finances/accountancy | Nil |
| • Human resources | 2 |
| • Technical | Nil |
| • Monitoring & Evaluation and Learning | 2 |
| • IT | 3 |
| • Knowledge management | Nil |
| • Public relations and external communication | 2 |
| • Others | Nil |
| Duration of work | 11 months |
| Internship agreed with an educational institution | Nil |
| Internship not agreed with an educational institution | 9 |
| Internship opportunity discovered through: | |
| • Job advertisement by ILC Africa on the internet | 5 |
| • A friend | 3 |
| • Journal ad | 1 |
| Internship based on learning objectives within educational curriculum | 3 |
| Internship not based on learning objectives within educational curriculum: | |
| • Orientation workshop organized in Accra | 6 |
| Current employment status: | |
| • Employed | 4 (international development agency in the area of ICT;M&E;database management) |
| • Unemployed | 5 |

Chapter 2: Process of the internship program

| | |
|--|--|
| Did you have a mentor/coordinator at CORAF/CILLS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No | 9 Nil |
| Overview of mentor/coordinator's responsibilities: | They were mainly in charge of supervising the work of interns, assist them with logistics and liaise with Africa Lead, ILC Africa and or CORAF/CILLS on their behalf. |
| Most important eye-openers for you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandrine Ouattara • Philippe Romero • Pauline Petryszny • Patrice Leumeni • Kelly Adediha • Kader Sanfo • Jorel Boulinzann • Idrissa Bourgou • Herve Zoc | <p>Even with great competencies and ambitions, it is necessary to understand the dynamics in working in groups and how others add value to one's work. This was an eye-opener for me.</p> <p>This was my first experience working in Africa: culture/ way of working was an eye-opener for me</p> <p>Première fois en Afrique, l'adaptation, couture et culture, resource humaines professionnelles, ont agrandir mon expérience</p> <p>when outside CORAF it seems the organization is without fault but when one is inside, one realises that there is a heap of problems; competence of some staff in certain portfolio/even those with doctorate degrees are questionable/ we as interns changed a lot in all departments where we were posted</p> <p>How development agencies work/the level of aid needed in developing countries</p> <p>Mes capacités à innover et le travail autonome</p> <p>la culture/couture sociale des Nigerian/la gestion/logement</p> <p>Lots of funding for food security (I realised)</p> <p>working with people from different backgrounds and cultures in a new country</p> |
| What can you already apply to your new job (given what you learnt during the internship): | Interns currently in employment (4 of them) generally would already put to use the skill of relationship building at the workplace, collaboration with people with different views, perspectives and cultural backgrounds; and fundraising. |
| What will you certainly apply in a future job (given what you learnt during the internship) | In a future job, those unemployed (5 of them) will apply skills acquired in communication (editing, journalistic writing, organization of seminars and trainings) and general business administration with an open-mind to use. |

Chapter 3: Interns satisfaction concerning

| | Very satisfied | To some extent satisfied | Not so satisfied | Not at all satisfied | Not applicable | Summary | Explanation |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|---|
| 1.Support from and guidance by your mentor/coordinator | 33.33%(3) | 55.56%(5) | 11.11%(1) | | | Majority of interns were satisfied to some extent (88.89%) while a minority of 11.11% were not so satisfied | Generally, interns posited that they received great support and direction from their mentors/coordinators in the discharge of their duties |
| 2.Help from other staff | 33.33%(3) | 44.45%(4) | | 22.22%(2) | | 77.78% of interns fell between very satisfied and to some extent while 22.22% were not so satisfied | Although some staff of host organizations were perceived to be very uncooperative and distant(because of being in the dark in view of the internship program), 3/4 of them gave a helping hand to interns (especially those working directly with the interns) |
| 3.Clarity about your responsibilities | 22.22%(2) | 11.11%(1) | 33.34%(3) | 33.33%(3) | | In relation to clarity of responsibilities, majority of interns (66.67%) were drifting towards non satisfaction | The general assertion is that interns apart from the Accra orientation which sought to bring to light the problems within CORAF/CILLS, there was no clarity on roles and responsibilities for the interns in the host organizations and this was a major source of confusion between interns and staff. |
| 4. Facilities of the organization (computer, use of a desk etc.) | 22.22%(2) | 22.22%(2) | 44.45%(4) | 11.11%(1) | | Majority of interns (55.56%) were drifting towards non satisfaction while 45% indicated they were very satisfied | Interns made use of an annex building where there was no electricity as an office. Computers and other administrative gadgets were almost not provided by host and this explains why the majority of interns drifted towards non satisfaction in that respect. |
| 5. Working atmosphere (time pressure, open culture...) | 33.33%(3) | 44.45%(4) | 11.11%(1) | 11.11%(1) | | 77.78% of interns drifted towards satisfaction while a minority of 11.11% were not at all satisfied | The work environment was generally conducive and encouraging given the openness of some staff members and the autonomy with which the interns discharged their duties. |
| 6.Opportunities given to learn and develop your competencies | 22.22%(2) | 11.11%(1) | 44.45%(4) | 22.22%(2) | | In relation to opportunities for learning, 66.67% were not satisfied where as 33.33% indicated they were satisfied | Room for learning and developing one's competencies was generally limited even though some interns asserted it suited them because they explored all areas of their host organization. |
| 7. Time allowed for learning | 11.11%(1) | 22.22%(2) | | 66.67%(6) | | A majority of 66.67% of interns indicated they were not at all satisfied with time allowed for formal learning while only 11.11% said they were satisfied. | Time allowed for formal learning was almost impossible given the workload the interns had to deal with. Moreover, majority of interns did not have the opportunity to attend regular organised training sessions because they were seen as interns and not staff members. |
| 8. The extent to which you were allowed to make mistakes in your job | 44.45%(4) | 44.44%(4) | 11.11%(1) | | | 88.89% of interns indicated they were satisfied with room given them to make mistakes. | Interns were encouraged to continue working at the instance of their mistakes while noticing and correcting their mistakes. |

Chapter 4: Extent of Improvement

| | To a large extent improved | To some extent improved | To little extent improved | Not at all improved | Not applicable | summary | explanation |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|--|
| 1.Technical knowledge and skills | 11.11%(1) | 55.55%(5) | 22.23%(2) | 11.11%(1) | | A majority of 66.67% asserted they have improved on technical knowledge and skills as against a minority of 33.34% | Since there was no specific job description, majority (66.67%) were always exploring (proactiveness) things at the office and this has in their view enhanced their technical knowledge and skills |
| 2.Problem solving skills | 33.34%(3) | 55.55%(5) | | 11.11%(1) | | Problem solving skills was perceived by 88.89% of interns to have improved while a minority of 11.11% have seen no improvement at all | Given the myriad problems of communication and coordination, most interns (88.89%) were one way or the other involved in solving one problem or the other and this has equipped them with problem solving skills |
| 3. Social skills (working with others, give feedback, teamwork...) | 22.22%(2) | 44.45%(4) | 11.11%(1) | 11.11%(1) | 11.11%(1) | Social skills was perceived by 66.67% of interns to have improved while 22.23% saw no improvement | Same as explanation for point 2: in solving problems upon problems, the social skills set of interns i.e. 66.67% were perceived to have improved |
| 4.Communication skills | 33.34%(3) | 33.33%(3) | 22.22%(2) | | 11.11%(1) | Communication skills was perceived by 66.64% of interns to have improved while 22.22% saw no improvement with 11.11% indicating non applicable | Same as explanation for point 2 |
| 5.Specific attitudes | 22.22%(2) | 55.55%(5) | 11.11%(1) | | | 77.78% improved on specific attitudes | N/A |
| 6. Other namely... | | | | 11.11%(1) | | | N/A |

Chapter 5: General Questions

| | |
|---|--|
| What did you like most about the program at CORAF/CILSS? | Generally it was perceived that working in an international environment/ experience with major donor groups coupled with responsibilities was most liked in the training program. |
| What did you like least about your internship at CORAF/CILSS? | Communication protocol, staff attitude towards interns and logistics were the factors least liked about the training program. |
| Is there a suggestion, idea... you would like to give CORAF/CILSS to improve the quality of internship programs for the future? | The overview of suggestions or ideas for improving the program spanned from clarifying duties and responsibilities of interns under the program, streamlining communication protocols between Africa Lead, ILC Africa and CORAF/CILSS vis-à-vis the interns, orientation of staff of CORAF/CILSS about the internship program to integrating the interns after a successful completion of the program as a sustainability measure, providing better office space for the program and changing the term "intern" to probably "young professionals". The stipends will also have to be increased for motivation. |
| Any other comment you would like to make about your internship at CORAF/CILSS? | It was perceived that the internship program is essential and a good opportunity for young people to unearth their talents despite the down falls expressed and if well managed and improved, it could generate transformational leaders and business people for the continent. |

Chapter 6: Importance of Internship Program for future careers of interns

| Important to a large extent | Important to some extent | Important to little extent | Not at all important | Not applicable | Summary | Explanation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|--|
| 22.22%(2) | 77.78%(7) | | | | Majority of interns (over 77%) believed that the program is in line and important for their future careers | Generally, the interns were of the view that haven worked in an international arena exposed them to a number of issues: working with people from different backgrounds and cultures, relationship building and networking, proactiveness and autonomy in working and the experience garnered are all important for their future careers. Not much emphasis was placed on program content since for majority of interns (66.67%), the program was not based on their learning curriculum at school. |

Annex 5 – facts and figures based on interviews with participants of NARS visitors program

1) *Process of the NARS visitors program – satisfaction as perceived by NARS visitors*

| | Very satisfied | To some extent satisfied | Not so satisfied | Not at all satisfied | Not applicable |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1.Support from and guidance by the CORAF interns during your visit | 67 % | 22 % | 11 % | | |
| 2.Support from and guidance by CORAF staff during your visit | 67 % | 22 % | 11% | | |
| 3. Clarity – before starting - about the visitors program | 67 % | | 33 % | | |
| 4.Clarity about what was expected from you during your visit | 44,5 % | 44,5 % | 11 % | | |
| 5.Facilities at CORAF (computer, use of a desk, internet,tel etc.) | 56 % | 33 % | 11 % | | |
| 6.Working atmosphere at CORAF (time pressure, open culture...) | 100 % | | | | |
| 7.Opportunities given to learn on-site | 78% | 22 % | | | |
| 8. Time allocated to each topic that was foreseen in the program | 22 % | 45 % | 22 % | 11 % | |
| 9. Practical usefulness of what you have learnt during your visit | 33 % | 56 % | 11 % | | |
| 10. Extent to which your initial expectations have been met | 11 % | 78 % | | | 11 % |

Explanation:

1. Support and guidance by the CORAF interns during your visit

Overall, the interviewees mentioned that the interns were all quite occupied during their visit. Therefore, there was not always sufficient time to offer the support and guidance they would have liked. One interviewee mentions that the interns were at all times available. Two persons mentioned that the interns were about to leave when they visited CORAF; the interns were busy meeting deadlines and – as one person mentions – they didn't get the hand-on experience they hoped to get.

2. Support from and guidance by CORAF staff during your visit

Almost all interviewees were very satisfied about the support and guidance by CORAF staff during their visit. Staff were helpful and always ready to receive the visitors. Three persons mentioned that they had the impression that CORAF staff was very busy, but that the staff made efforts to give the support that was needed and to answer the questions that were raised.

3. Clarity –before starting - about the visitors program

All of the interviewees received information about the program prior to the start of the program. The program was clear.

4. Clarity about what was expected from you during your visit

Overall, according to almost all the interviewees (8 persons out of nine) it was clear what was expected from them during their visit. Four persons mentioned explicitly that they were supposed to acquire better knowledge about CORAF.

5. Facilities at CORAF (computer, use of a desk, internet, tel etc.)

According to almost all interviewees, everything was put at their disposal. The working conditions were very much appreciated. One person mentioned that internet did not work all the time and two persons mentioned that the allowance for telephone costs was not enough for the time of their stay.

6. Working atmosphere at CORAF (time pressure, open culture...)

All interviewees considered that there was a very social and pleasant working atmosphere. Almost all interviewees referred to the coffee break every morning in which all staff participated. Some of the interviewees mentioned that this was a learning experience for them.

7. Opportunities given to learn on-site

According to almost all interviewees, there were enough opportunities to learn on-site. This was especially the case at CORAF's location. One interviewee mentioned that there was not sufficient time to learn on-site.

8. Time allocated to each topic that was foreseen in the program

Many of the interviewees considered that there was not enough time for each of the topics in the program. Sometimes, the amount of time foreseen for a topic was not sufficient. Interviewees would have liked to have more time for presentations.

9. Practical usefulness of what you have learnt during your visit

In the opinion of the interviewees, it was not easy to apply the lessons learned during their visit. However, the concrete tools (example: templates for reporting) that were provided during their visit, were practically useful. Some mentioned that they need to make propositions to their superiors in order to be able to use all the information in a practical way.

10. Extent to which your initial expectations have been met

For those who expressed that they had initial expectations, these have largely been met. One person mentioned that he learned things that were not in the program. This refers to 'soft' skills: being able to communicate with other persons working in the same field of expertise, but working in different countries. It was much appreciated to get to know other persons with whom they could exchange.

Other comments on satisfaction about guidance and support at CORAF

Interviewees were again thankful to CORAF that CORAF staff were helpful in helping to realise their learning objectives.

2) Improvement of skills as perceived by NARS visitors

| | To a large extent improved | To some extent improved | To little extent improved | Not at all improved | Not applicable |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1.Problem solving skills | 56 % | 45% | | | |
| 2. Social skills (working with others, give feedback, teamwork...) | 78% | 11% | 11% | | |
| 3.Communication skills | 56% | 22% | 11% | | 11% |
| 4.Specific attitudes | 45% | | | | 55% |
| 5. Other namely... | | | | | 100% |

Explanation:

1. Problem solving skills

More than half of the interviewees (56%) acknowledged that their problem solving skills were to a large extent improved. The remaining rest (45 %) considered their problem solving skills to some extent improved. Interviewees referred to knowledge they acquired about different topics in combination with practical skills to implement this knowledge. One interviewee mentioned that he is better equipped to make reports; he learned the need to be focused on impact while doing this. Another interviewee approved that he understood once more that it is not smart to work alone and that it is better to work with others in order

to be able to solve problems. One interviewee considered that his knowledge was to some extent improved and that it could have been to a large extent if there would have been more time allocated to the different topics.

2. Social skills (working with others, give feedback, teamwork...)

Almost 80% of the interviewees acknowledged that their social skills were to a large extent improved. The argument for this was as follows: to experience the open culture at CORAF allowed trying to introduce this at the interviewee's own working situation. Almost all interviewees were triggered by this open culture and experienced this as very positive. One interviewee mentioned that he understood the necessity to work in a team and that he saw how this successfully worked at CORAF.

3. Communication skills

More than half of the interviewees (56%) acknowledged that their communication skills were to a large extent improved. Interviewees from Central Africa noticed that communication within their institutions appears to be problematic: people don't communicate on what they are doing and the hierarchical organizational structure does not favour flat communication. Two interviewees marked that they learned to favour communication with beneficiaries and to communicate the results of their scientific work. They understood the importance of communication of their publications to be able to attract funding for new (research) projects.

4. Specific attitudes

Less than half of the interviewees (45%) mentioned that they improved specific attitudes such as favouring team work, taking some distance when writing a report (in order to improve it), dealing with donors, better professional competencies.

5. Others, namely...

Not relevant.

3) List of interviewees NARS visitors program

| Name interviewee | Country | Organization |
|------------------|------------|---|
| Almeck ABOUBAKAR | Cameroon | IRAD / Centre Régional Wakwa |
| David KOFFA | Liberia | CARI |
| Valentin PANGO | Congo | DGRST |
| Adija NJOUPUOU | Cameroon | IRAD |
| Jeffrey YEBOAH | Ghana | CSIR-INSTI (Inst. for Sci. and Tech. Information) |
| Branly EFFA EFFA | Gabon | IRAF |
| Mamadou DIA | Mauritania | CNERV (National Ctr for Vet. Study & Research) |
| Ernest KONGUERE | CAR | ICRA |
| Nadege MBAZO'O | Cameroon | IRAD |

Annex 6 – Summary of trainings

CILSS

| 1. Summary training course communication/ public relations | |
|---|--|
| Period | 13-14/08/2012 (2 days) |
| Training institute | G&A Business Solutions |
| Target group | Not mentioned in the training report if the training targeted a specific group. It can be assumed that staff from different departments and different functions have participated |
| Number of participants | 20 |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To gain insight in the operational role of communication and public relations within the strategy of CILSS; - To learn how to use different tools, methods and social networks e.g. to improve the visibility of CILSS; - To understand how to use communication and public relations in fund raising; - To develop a personal action plan in order to execute it and measure its impact taking into account the predefined objectives. |
| Training results | See report part I – CILSS: ‘effects at institutional level’ No other training results have been mentioned in the report |
| Recommendations formulated (by participants, not by trainers) | Participants have expressed the need to receive additional training on ‘speaking in public’ and additional coaching on the job during which the G&A consultant could work with the team responsible for communication on specific topics for a predetermined period of time. |
| 2. Summary HR training course | |
| Period | 3 days + several coaching days in Niamey (2) and Ouagadougou (3) – Sept’12 |
| Training institute | MDF |
| Target group | Not specified |
| Number of participants | 9 |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR training to improve knowledge and skills on HR - Coaching on the spot to appreciate and recognize existing HR practices and to formulate recommendations to improve HRM at CILSS |
| Main topics training | HR model and HR roles Performance and competency management Motivation and staff development |

| | |
|--|---|
| Training results | As an immediate training result, participants have developed an action plan to improve HR practices at institutional level, and have been made more aware of the institutional strengths and weaknesses regarding HRM. |
| Recommendations formulated (by participants, not by trainers) | <p>Participants stated that both the HR planning and staff development policy should improve as well as the positioning of HR at a more strategic level. Several HR policies should be developed and approved by the proper hierarchical level. The policy frame on HR and legal HR issues should be revised as well as some of the HR policies like staff remuneration. Another recommendation is to introduce induction sessions and to improve the guidance of staff.</p> <p>Furthermore it is recommended to foresee a training that lasts a bit longer, with more practical exercises, and the inclusion of more staff from the top level.</p> |

| Summary Training “Proposal Writing” | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Period | 16-17 Nov.'12 (2 days) |
| Training institute | MDF |
| Target group | Leading officers of CORAF |
| Number of participants | 14 |
| Objectives | <p>After the training, participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand better the concept of writing a project proposal - Know how the structure of a project proposal looks like - Have reflected on the procedure of fund mobilisation for their own organization - Know the content of a call for proposals |
| Main topics training | <p>Examples “Appel à proposition/Request for Proposal” from the EU and USAID served as case material for the training.</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy on resource mobilisation for CILSS - Building blocks project proposal - Identifying financial opportunities - How to appreciate and improve the quality of a project proposal - How to come to a more effective writing proposal process |
| Training results | <p>Participants have worked on 4 real project proposals during the training. Based on a critical analysis of these proposals, recommendations were formulated by the participants to improve the quality of these proposals.</p> <p>Furthermore participants have formulated concrete recommendations and ideas for their own organization regarding fund mobilization e.g.:</p> <p>Institut du Sahel: recommendations in the field of identifying opportunities, writing of project proposals and ensuring quality of project proposals by appointing a quality committee</p> <p>AGRHYMET: to install a ‘watchdog’ committee to watch over financial opportunities</p> <p>CILSS: revive strategic –searching or identification of opportunities,</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | make use of experts for writing proposals, analyze calls for proposals, involve a pluridisciplinary team when elaborating proposals, analyze inter-and intrasites |
| Recommendations formulated (by the trainer) | <p>During the training it became clear that not all participants knew about a report called, “<i>STRATEGIE DE MOBILISATION DE RESSOURCES FINANCIERES STABLES ET DURABLES POUR LE CILSS</i>”, elaborated by an external consultant Pierre Claver Damiba, May 2009. In this report recommendations are formulated regarding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of attractive programs 2. Support to resource mobilisation 3. Consolidation and diversification of financial resources <p>Finally also the trainer of the proposal writing training has formulated some recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to follow up the recommendations appropriately; - to appoint a staff member to keep CILSS updated and informed on donor requirements like EU/CTA, USAID and others; - to install a procedure to ensure quality of proposals to be sent to donors; - to install a procedure allowing an immediate yes/no respons on a call for proposals; - to prepare draft versions for certain types of project proposals so that a prompt respons on a call for proposals can be ensured - not only resource mobilization should be put in place, also the execution of a project should be managed appropriately which requires strengthening of HR, financial and technical resources; - to follow up submitted project proposals and to include a procedure to make sure CILSS will be informed on a go/no go which can help to improve future proposals; - to develop annual objectives for resource mobilization at institutional and senior officer level. |

| Summary training “Budgeting” | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Period | 3 days (17-19 Oct/’12) |
| Training institute | MDF |
| Target group | Leading officers from CILSS, AGRHYMET and INSAH. It was not specified in the training report if the financial staff was specifically targeted. Based on the participant evaluations, it seems that both financial and non financial staff participated in the training. |
| Number of participants | 16 (from CILSS (11), AGRHYMET (3) and INSAH (2)) |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of a budget according to donor requirements - Cost allocation according to budget lines and codes to be used in projects - Budget monitoring and analysis - Financial reporting |
| Main topics training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgeting : definition, principles, functions and types of budget - How to elaborate a budget in line with donor requirements - From the logical framework to the budget in line with the project cycle - Putting in place the budget |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost allocation - Budget monitoring and analysis - Financial reporting |
| Training results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased knowledge, skills on the topics mentioned above - Increased awareness that there are still financial aspects within CILSS that can be improved |
| Recommendations formulated (by participants, not by trainers) | <p>Participants have become aware that the following aspects of Budgeting need improvement at the institutional level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular follow up of the budget - To improve tools on budgeting and their application - To ensure that all relevant actors should participate in development of the budget - To harmonize financial reports and activities - To put in place a good budgeting method to avoid unpleasant surprises during execution of this budget <p>Other recommendations made include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A program of at least 5 days would have been better - Repeat this training for experts and program coordinators of CILSS to sensitize them as well on the budgeting process - Execute the training separately for financial and non-financial staff - Use more reality-based examples from CILSS - Include more theoretical topics so that a better basis can be built when the linkage with the daily practice or exercises is made |

| Summary training “Result Based Management” | |
|--|--|
| Period | 13-15 Oct.'12 (3 days) |
| Training institute | Not mentioned explicitly |
| Target group | CILSS staff (not a specified target group) |
| Number of participants | 12 |
| Objectives | <p>The objective of the training was to introduce CILSS participants to RBM concepts and lead them through practical activities related to their own environment.</p> <p>After the training participants should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe RBM concepts; 2. Describe some keys words such as results, results chains and indicators and performance monitoring system; 3. Formulate a SMART result and analyze CILSS's Results Framework; 4. List recommendations for incorporating RBM approach into CILSS management; 5. Create CILSS management tools to better achieve results. |
| Main topics training | <p>Definition of RBM, some key concepts and the application steps.</p> <p>Participants selected three contracts to be analyzed (projects funded by USAID, the European Union, and AFD through ECOWAS). They developed a Monitoring Framework related to each contract.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Training results | <p>The training report mentions the following learning results as indicated by the participants at the end of the training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RBM is a participatory management style that requires the participation of all as well as good listening skills by all top senior officials. - Concrete application of RBM to CILSS - Results chains - What a SMART result is about - Difference between Results and Activities - Simplicity and on the job learning are some principles of RBM application - Management tools are important for monitoring donor contracts |
| Recommendations formulated (by participants, not by trainers) | <p>At institutional level :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revise the reporting system as it relates to the report format as well as content to make it simpler and result focused. - Complete the road map for monitoring all contracts with technical and financial partners. - Review the various Logical Frameworks and the Results Framework, especially for the next 5-year plan. |

| Summary training “Evaluation” | |
|---|--|
| Period | 17-19 Dec.'12 (3 days) |
| Training institute | MDF |
| Target group | Mixed group based on the function (M&E staff), staff with professional experience and staff with experience in M&E |
| Number of participants | 22 |
| Objectives | <p>After the training, participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - know the evaluation concept - understand the difference between planning, monitoring and evaluation - understand different types of evaluation - are able to identify different evaluation approaches and to draw terms of reference for an external |
| Main topics training | <p>See objectives</p> <p>The training focused on evaluation of projects/programs, not on evaluation of a policy or strategy</p> |
| Training results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The training has provided a good basic knowledge on evaluation for staff not familiar with this topic. - Staff already familiar with evaluation have refreshed their knowledge/skills and added some new skills/knowledge on e.g. the Most Significance Change method. |
| Recommendations formulated (by trainers) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A separate more in-depth training for M&E staff - Rethink the roles and specialties of the different M&E staff member to come to better role division - Include Most Significant Change Method and apply in order to |

- come to a best practice internal and/or external publication
- Organize a workshop on impact evaluation for a limited number of staff. Impact evaluation is often asked by donors and therefore it deserves more attention to it since this requires specific expertise

CORAF

| Summary HR training course | |
|---|--|
| Period | 3 days training + 2 days coaching (6-10 August '12) |
| Training institute | MDF |
| Target group | Mixed group of staff members |
| Number of participants | 12 |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR training to improve knowledge and skills on HR - Coaching on the spot to appreciate and recognize existing HR practices and to formulate recommendations to improve HRM at CORAF |
| Main topics training/coaching | <p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR model and HR roles - HR policies - HR planning - Performance management - Motivation and staff development - Remuneration - Give and get feedback <p>Coaching: Review of HR documents Interview with CORAF staff member and staff responsible for HR (2 persons)</p> |
| Training results | <p>As an immediate training result, participants have developed an action plan to improve HR practices at institutional level (see table under b) institutional changes).</p> <p>As a result of the training, participants have been made more aware of the institutional strengths and weaknesses regarding HRM (see table under b) personnel changes)</p> |
| Recommendations formulated (by trainers based on coaching) | <p>The coaching has resulted in the recommendation to foresee (please reword) an HR function, separate from the financial function and at management level to enable appropriate development and execution of HR policies and strategy, in line with the overall strategy and objectives of ? .</p> <p>Other recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure all staff know about and have sufficient access to the existing HR manual so that the content can be adopted and practiced by all - Distinguish better policies from procedures since these are not the same - Operational recommendations to optimize procedures and processes described in the HR manual - Complete the job descriptions (not all functions have a JD) - Align annual individual objectives better with the JD - Complete all performance appraisals and introduce mid year performance reviews (formal and informal) |

- Explain better the temporary contracts
- Be more transparent on the salary policy
- Foresee and plan staff development opportunities in a more formal, systematic way and where needed

Summary Training “Writing Proposals”

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| Period | 12-14 Dec.'12 (3 days) |
| Training institute | MDF |
| Target group | Leading officers of institutions partnering with CORAF (agricultural research institutions) |
| Number of participants | 15, coming from different countries |
| Objectives | <p>After the training, participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand better the concept of writing a project proposal - Know how the structure of a project proposal looks like - Have reflected on the procedure of fund mobilisation for their own organization - Know the content of a call for proposals |
| Main topics training | <p>Examples “Appel à proposition/Request for Proposal” from the EU and USAID served as case material for the training.</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy on resource mobilisation - Building blocks project proposal - Identifying financial opportunities - How to appreciate and improve the quality of a project proposal - How to come to a more effective writing proposal process |
| Training results | See under b) Changes at personnel level |
| Recommendations formulated (by the participants) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide the own organization-based strategy document on resource mobilization to participants of the training, in case this document exists - Strengthen the networks to obtain more financial resources and screen regularly the websites in order to detect opportunities regarding potential funding by donors - Reinforce the involvement of all relevant staff to contribute to writing project proposals from the start (concept phase) until the end - Plan follow up trainings for these staff members in order to strengthen their capacities in the field of Managing for Development Results, Collecting and Analysis of Data in function of a participatory diagnosis, Planning of projects and resource mobilization, M&E, Project Cycle Management incl. Logical Framework Approach, Project/Programma Management: tools and management skills. |

| Summary training “Result Based Monitoring- RBM + Leadership” | |
|--|---|
| Period | 22-26 July '12 (5 days) |
| Training institute | Africa Lead |
| Target group | CORAF and research institutions from different countries (13) |
| Number of participants | 17 participants from 13 countries (research institutions) |
| Objectives | To strengthen the capacities of CORAF staff especially those in Monitoring and Evaluation to assume leadership roles and to incorporate Results-Based Management in their institutions. |
| Main topics training | Definition and concepts of RBM and Leadership (not specified in the training report) |
| Training results | Knowledge and skills on RBM and Leadership have been acquired which give a basis for some changes at personnel level (see table under b) |
| Recommendations formulated (by participants) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrate RBM within the strategy of the institution (on-going at the moment of the training) - A reliable up to date information will be given to the director and services and documents will be shared - Align more with this way of thinking - Generalize the training on RBM and leadership - Have a budget line for M&E - Train staff at different levels on the concepts of RBM and leadership - Identify problems in the organization preventing achievement of results - Share visions for the future - Management should integrate RBM approach for decision making |

| Summary training “Result Based Monitoring- RBM 1+ 2” | |
|--|---|
| Period | 3-5 May '12 (3 days) RBM1 19-21 Sept.'12(3 days) RBM2 |
| Training institute | Africa Lead |
| Target group | RBM1: CORAF top manager and senior staff RBM2: idem |
| Number of participants | RBM1: 19 RBM2: 22 |
| Objectives | <p>The RBM training Part I covered the definition of RBM, some key concepts, and the application steps. Practical exercises were also included.</p> <p>RBM2: The objective of the training was to bring RBM into CORAF/WECARD management by reviewing CORAF/WECARD management tools and applying RBM principles and implementation steps.</p> |

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| Main topics training | <p>RBM1: RBM concepts; Definition on results, results chain, indicators and performance monitoring system; Formulation of a SMART result and analysis of the CORAF's Results Framework; Development of recommendations for incorporating RBM approach into CORAF management and creation of CORAF management tools to better achieve results.</p> <p>RBM2: Implementation Steps 5 to 10 and the cross-cutting steps; Review CORAF/WECARD's Results Framework; Review of the Monitoring Plans and the communication strategy; Management Tools to monitor; Management Tools for planning and monitoring donors' contracts; Analysis of the relevance of programs and projects, and analysis of the completeness of the programs and projects with regard to CORAF/WECARD's objectives and results.</p> |
| Training results | <p>RBM1: Knowledge and skills on RBM (see table under b), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulation of objectives and SMART results - Notion of contract requirements and fulfilment of the conditions by better monitoring the deliverables - Inclusive and participatory process - Management tools for monitoring donor contracts are available - Logical Framework to present objectives and results is known - RBM provides management tools to improve performance of the organization - A practical list of steps to implement RBM (tools, products, responsibilities and involvement at each step). - Increased focus on results rather than activities - Results chains <p>RBM2: Not mentioned as such in the report</p> |
| Recommendations formulated (by participants, not by trainers) | <p>Institutional level:</p> <p>RBM1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Logical Framework of CORAF should have more than one specific objective - Extend RBM training to all staff members and provide coaching to ensure change - Continue to elaborate the road map for monitoring the different contracts with partners (PTF) - Apply this training concepts in : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o reformulating our indicators; o elaborating the 2013 Operations Plan (PTBA 2013) <p>RBM2 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define IAR4D and share it among staff members and country teams. - Send (again) to each participant and other staff the official documents and procedures, and organize a workshop (1 hour to a full day) to present each document. These documents include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o the Strategic Plan with the new set of indicators o the Communication Plan o the reporting schedule o the indicators - Share RBM with all staff, at the regional office and in countries. - Organize the development of a complete M&E plan - Review the Strategic Plan (objectives, results, indicators) in preparation for the new planning phase for CORAF/WECARD. |

| Summary training “Monitoring and Evaluation- M&E” | |
|---|--|
| Period | 19-21 Sept.’12 (3 days) |
| Training institute | Africa Lead |
| Target group | CORAF staff (not a specified target group) |
| Number of participants | 12 |
| Objectives | No specific objectives are mentioned in the training report |
| Main topics training | The training covered the basics of M&E, and an application related to the context, primarily using USAID Performance Management Toolkit also referred to as “the PMP Toolkit Crash Course”. Practical exercises were done using the Institutional context, and provided the ground for improving CORAF M&E systems. |
| Training results | See table under b) |
| Recommendations formulated by trainers: | <p>By the trainers:</p> <p>At institutional level :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 to 5 day training for the project and program managers that were not able to come to this training - 5 day training of the country based managers (NARS) - a 2-3 month consultation/coaching to assist in : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o developing the M&E shell for the whole organization o developing the M&E for USAID funded projects and WAAPP project o guiding other managers (regional office and country offices) in developing their M&E system in line with the overall CORAF M&E system. - 3-6 month M&E training for the M&E manager in a bilingual or English environment <p>By the participants:</p> <p>The next steps identified by the participants are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change the “police” or “watchdog” perception that staff members have of the M&E unit - Read all documentation thoroughly - Update the CORAF M&E system : set up a team and recruit a consultant - Finalize the TOR for a consultant to develop/improve/finalize the PMP for USAID-funded projects. |